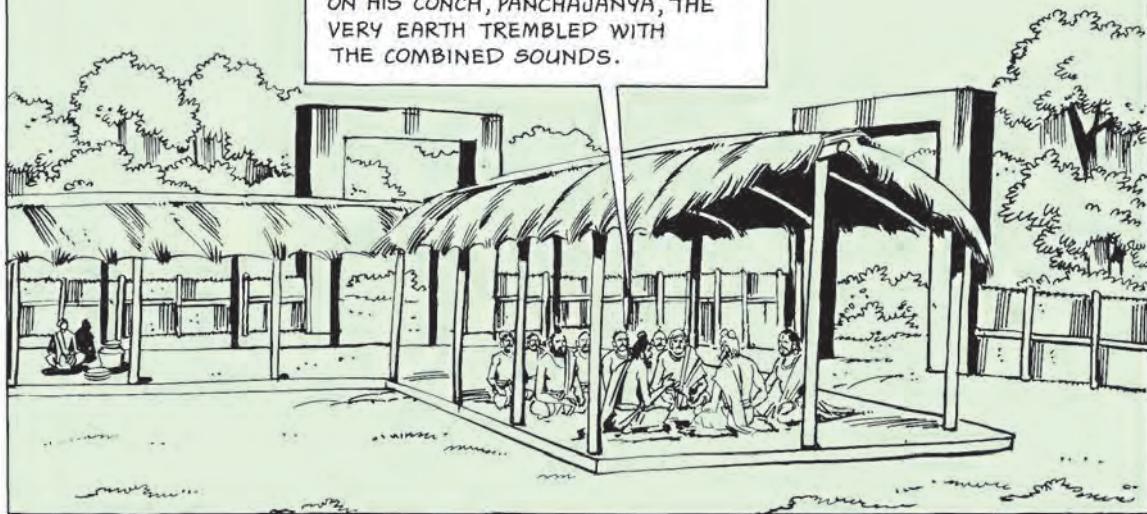


Mahabharata - 35

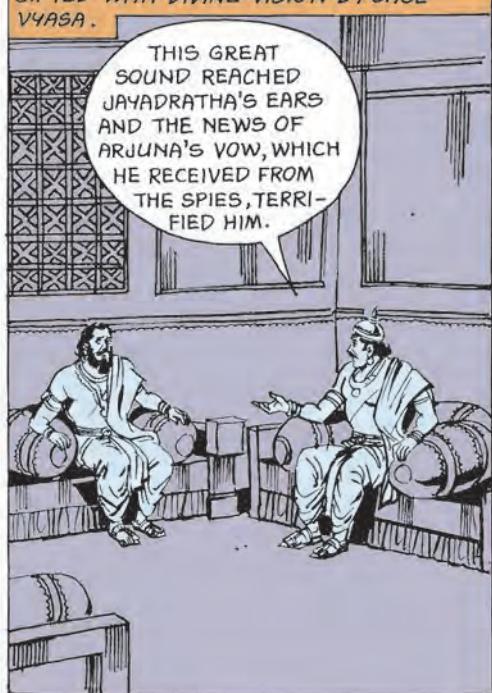
ARJUNA FULFILS HIS VOW

WHEN ARJUNA TOOK A VOW TO KILL JAYADRATHA, AND TWANGED HIS BOW AND KRISHNA BLEW LUSTILY ON HIS CONCH, PANCHAJANYA, THE VERY EARTH TREMBLED WITH THE COMBINED SOUNDS.



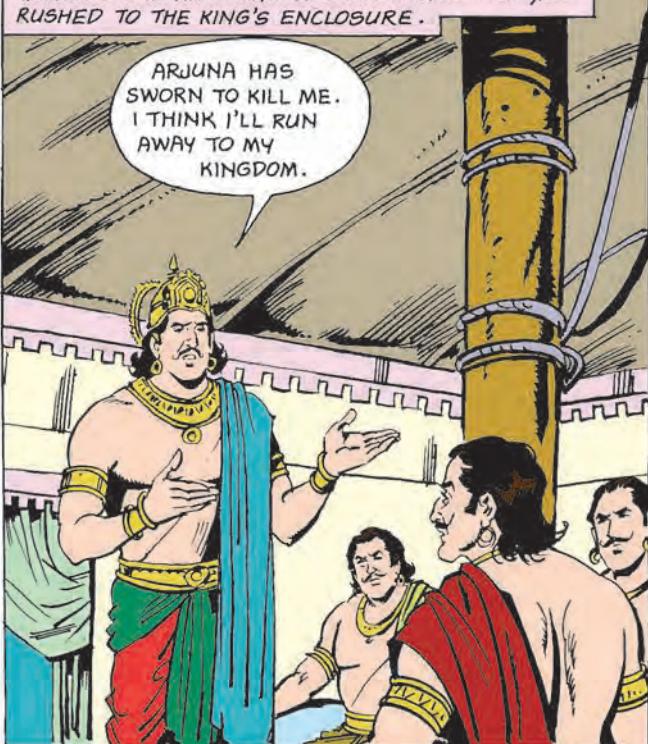
"THE SCENE IS NARRATED TO DHRITARASHTRA BY SANJAYA, WHO HAS BEEN GIFTED WITH DIVINE VISION BY SAGE VYASA.

THIS GREAT SOUND REACHED JAYADRATHA'S EARS AND THE NEWS OF ARJUNA'S VOW, WHICH HE RECEIVED FROM THE SPIES, TERRIFIED HIM.

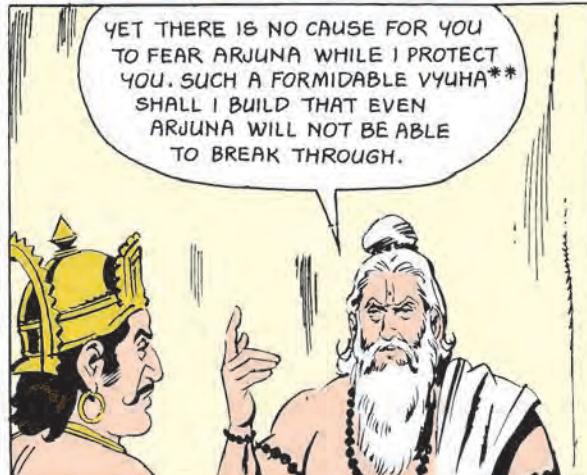
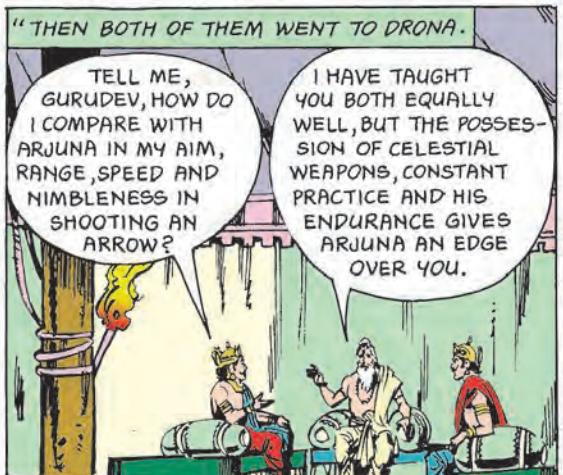
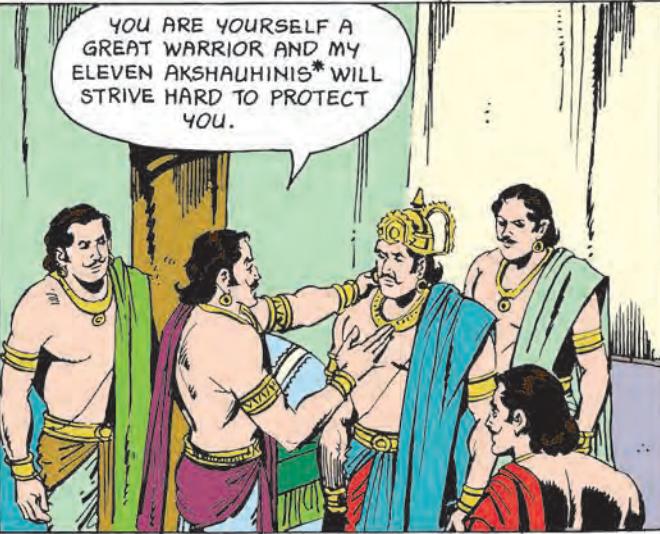
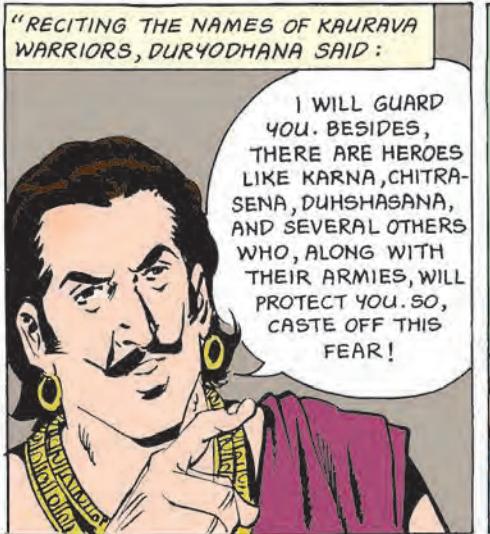
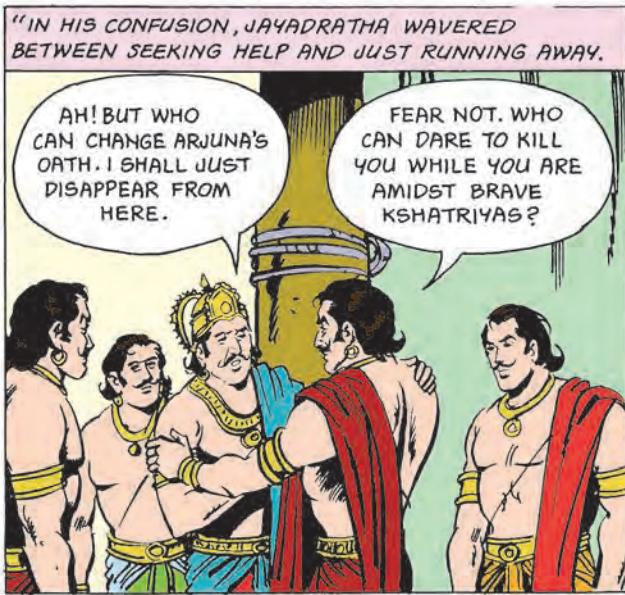
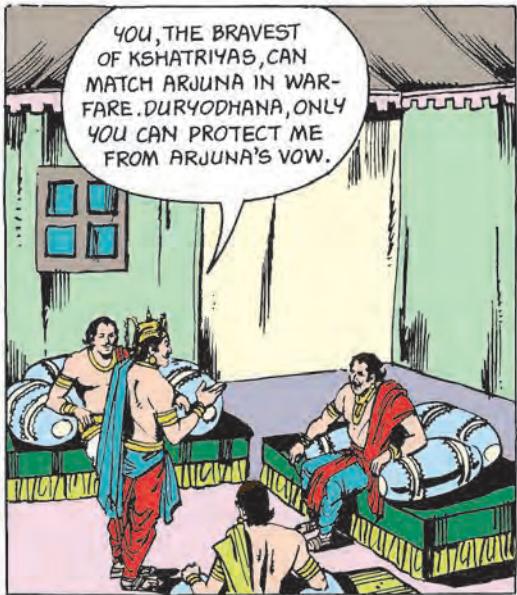


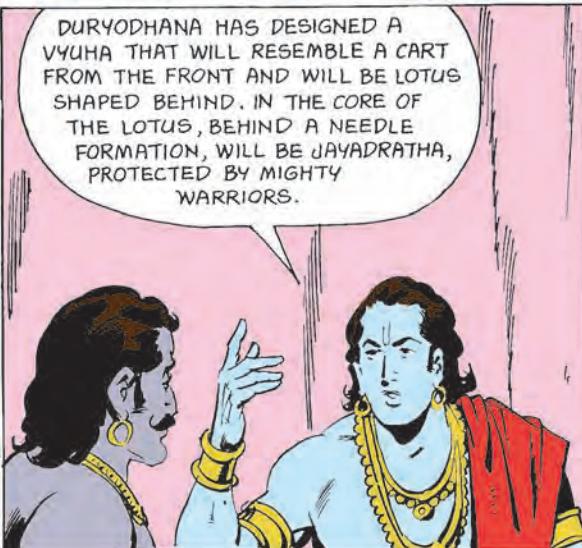
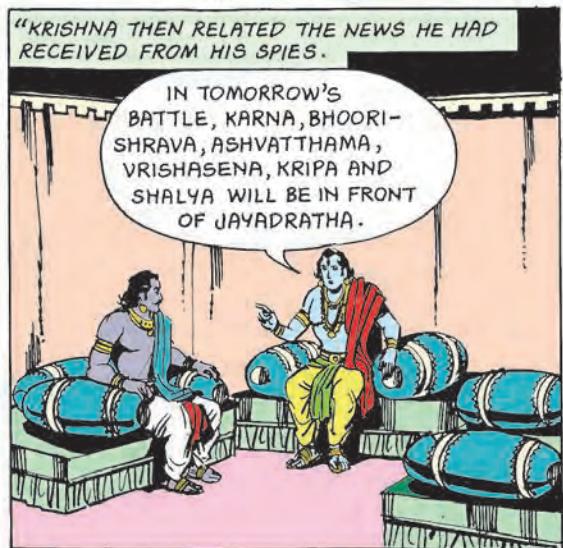
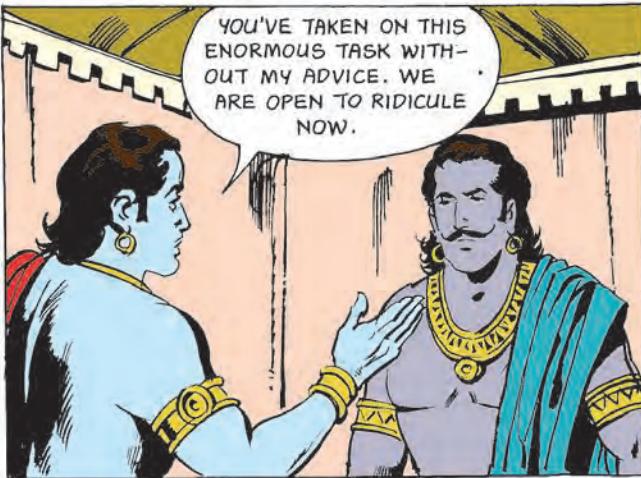
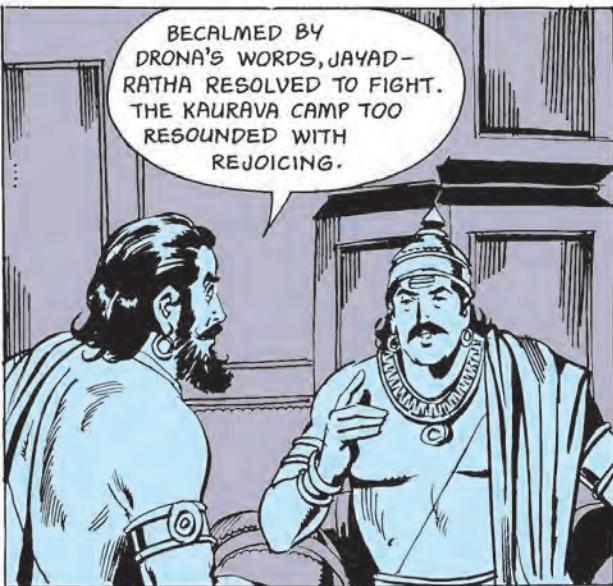
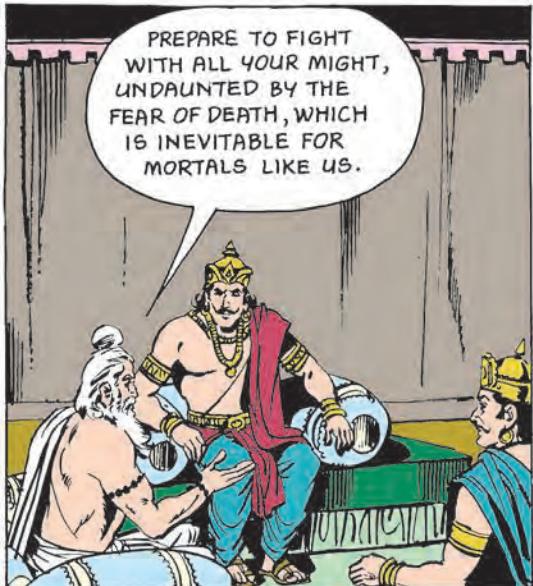
"IMMERSED IN AN OCEAN OF SORROW AND FEAR, HE RUSHED TO THE KING'S ENCLOSURE.

ARJUNA HAS SWORN TO KILL ME. I THINK I'LL RUN AWAY TO MY KINGDOM.

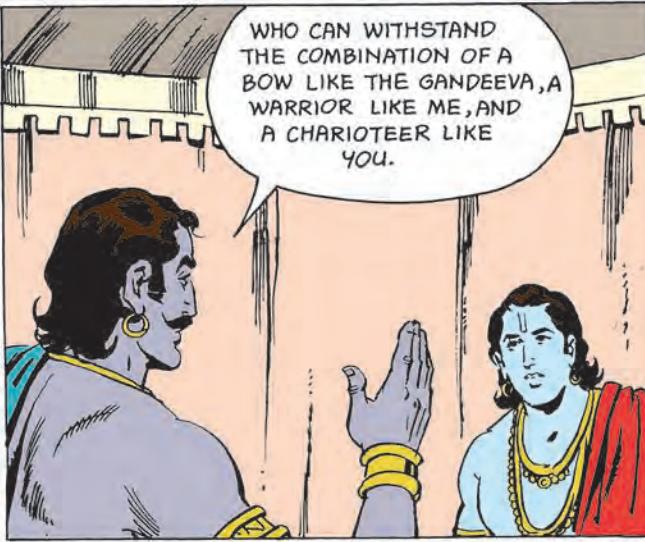
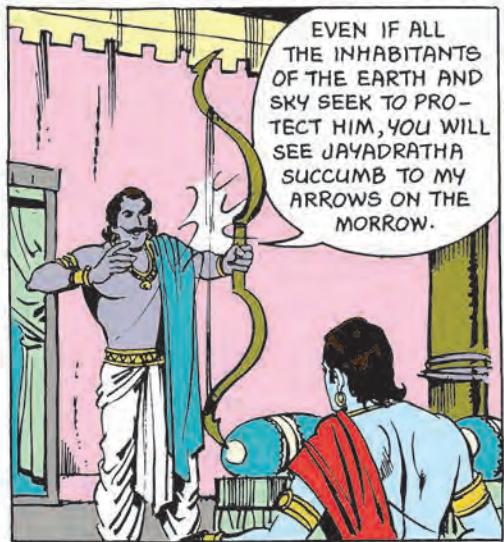
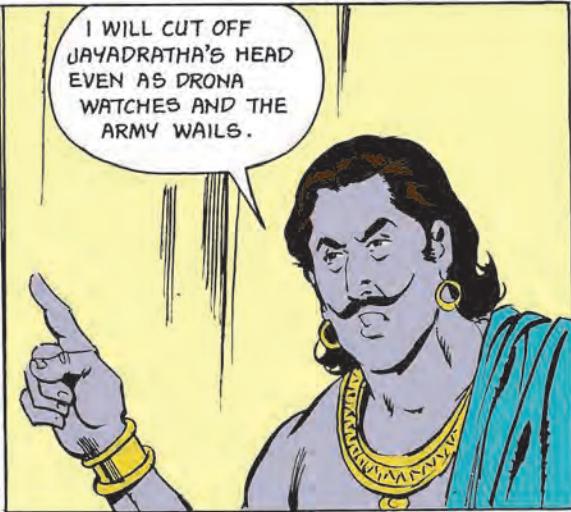
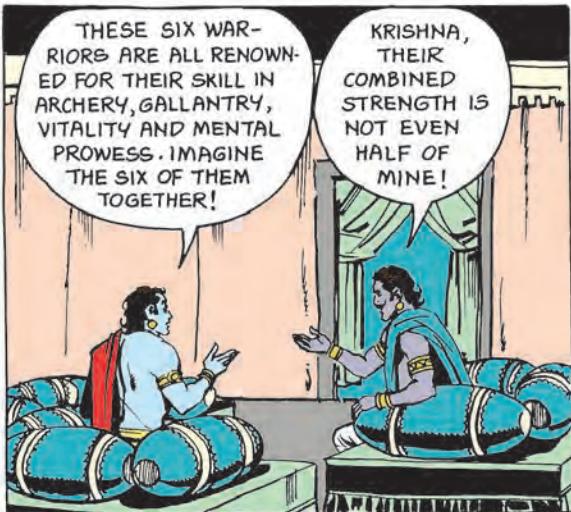


ARJUNA FULFILS HIS VOW





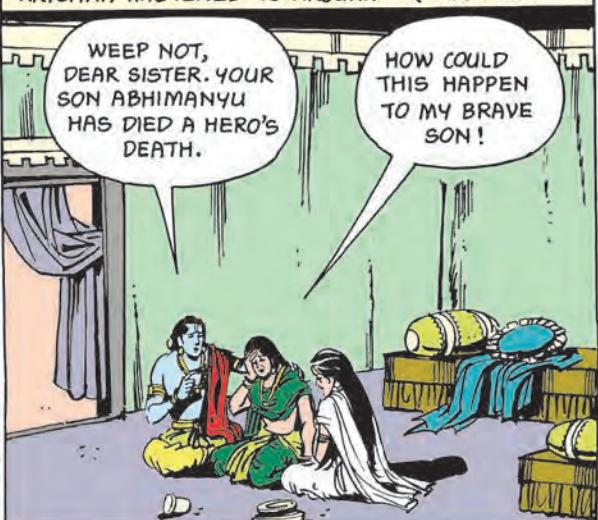
ARJUNA FULFILS HIS VOW



"BOTH ARJUNA AND KRISHNA SAT SILENTLY FOR A WHILE.



"KRISHNA HASTENED TO ARJUNA'S QUARTERS.



"KRISHNA PERSUDED HIS SISTER TO CONTAIN HER SORROW AND CONSOLE HER DAUGHTER-IN-LAW, UTTARA.



"BACK IN HIS QUARTERS, THE THOUGHT OF ARJUNA'S VOW TORMENTED HIM. HE CALLED OUT TO DARUKA AT MIDNIGHT.

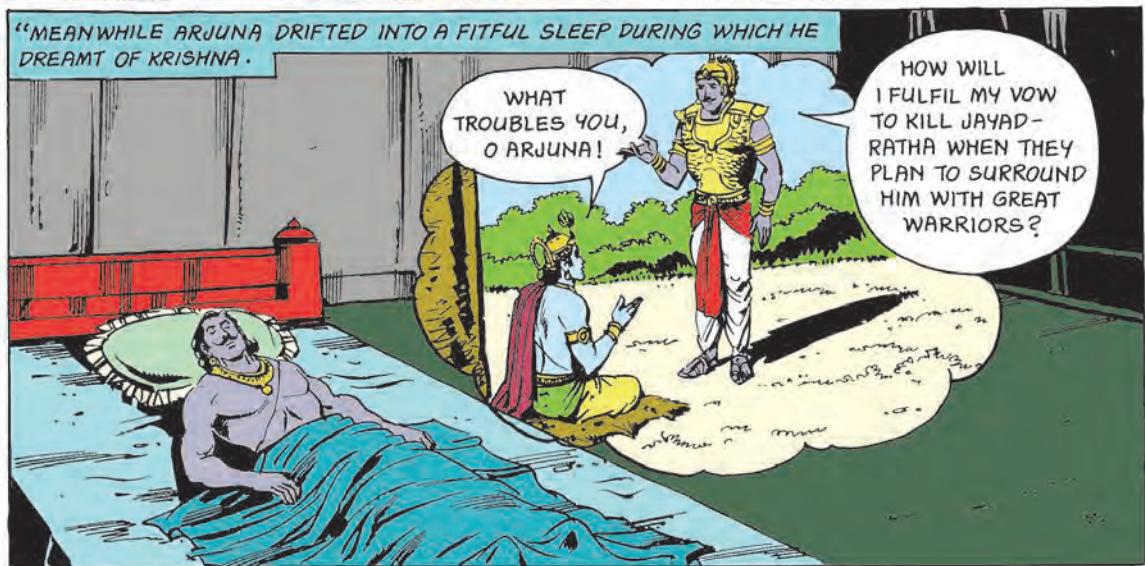


PREPARE MY OWN CHARIOT FOR WAR AND PLACE ALL MY WEAPONS IN IT. ANYTIME TOMORROW, WHEN YOU HEAR THE RISHABHA* NOTE ON MY CONCH, RUSH TO ME.

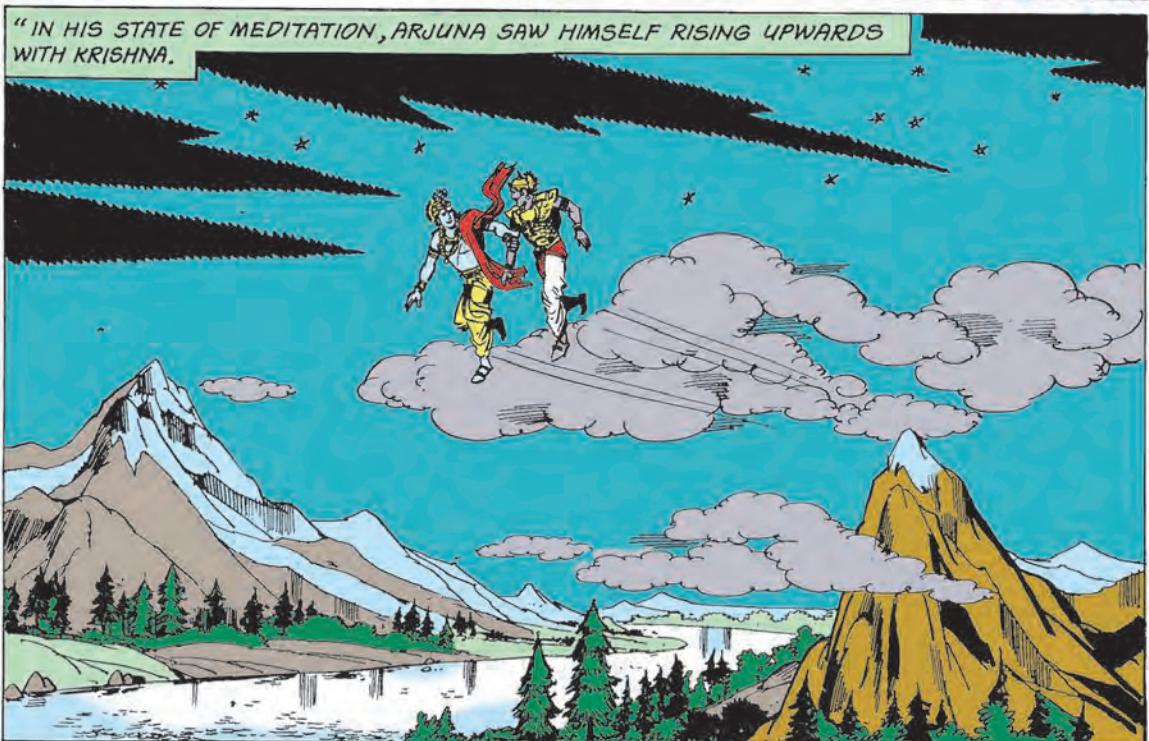
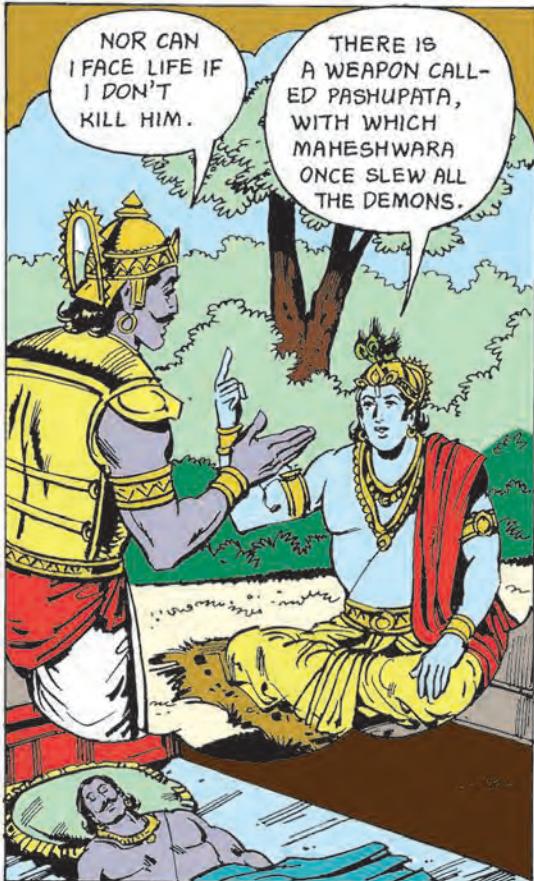
I'LL DO AS YOU BID TO HELP ARJUNA SUCCEED.



"MEANWHILE ARJUNA DRIFTED INTO A FITFUL SLEEP DURING WHICH HE DREAMT OF KRISHNA.



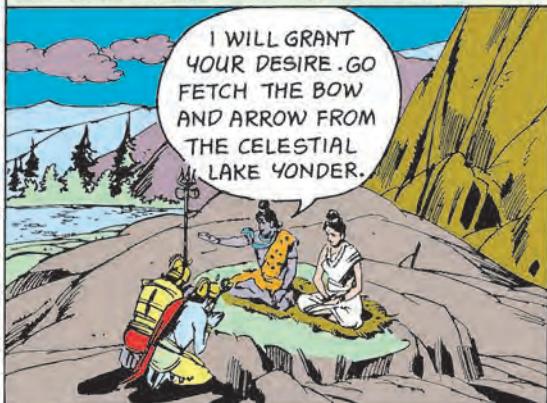
ARJUNA FULFILS HIS VOW



"AS THEY SPED PAST LIKE ARROWS RELEASED FROM A BOW, THEY BEHELD A GLOWING MOUNTAIN, RADIANT LIKE THE SUN. ON THE PEAK WAS SEATED LORD SHIVA.



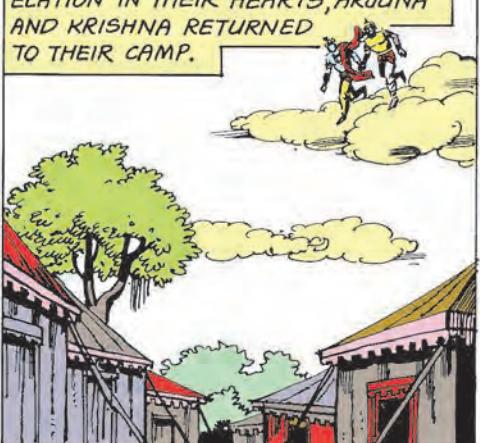
"AFTER BOWING TO THE LORD, ARJUNA AND KRISHNA BEGAN TO PRAY TO HIM.



AS SUGGESTED BY LORD SHIVA, ARJUNA AND KRISHNA RESCUED THE BOW AND ARROW WHICH WERE DISGUISED AS FEROCIOUS SERPENTS. ARJUNA THEN LEARNED THE MANTRA* FOR USING THE PASHUPATA FROM THE LORD HIMSELF.



"THUS ARMED AND WITH GREAT ELATION IN THEIR HEARTS, ARJUNA AND KRISHNA RETURNED TO THEIR CAMP."



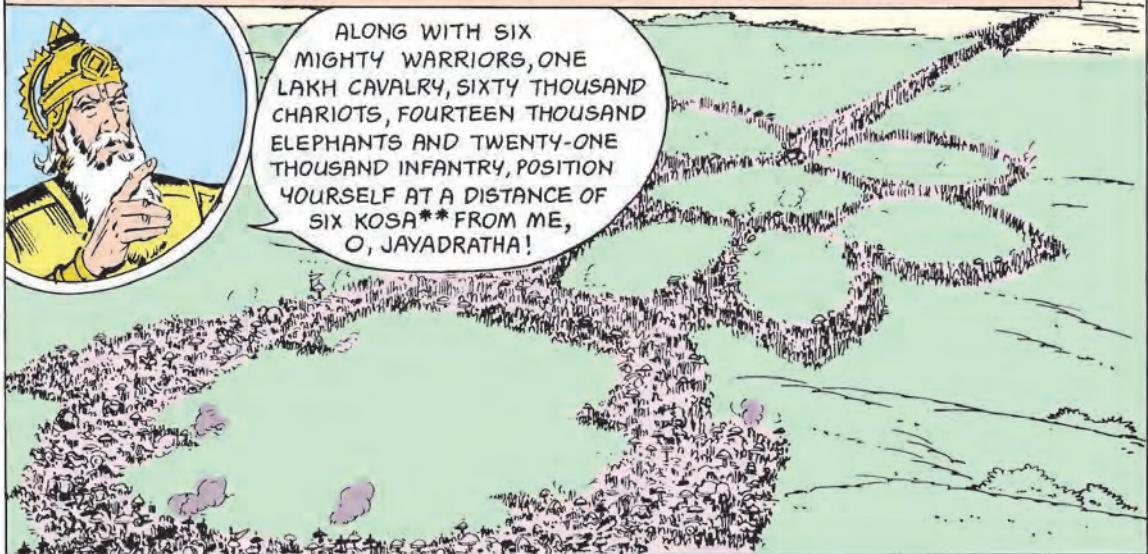
"THE DAWN OF THE FOURTEENTH DAY OF THE WAR FOUND THE PANDAVAS IN A HAPPY MOOD. ARJUNA SAID TO SATYAKI:

WHILE I MUST KILL JAYADRATHA TODAY, I AM DUTY BOUND TO PROTECT YUDHISHTHIRA. TODAY, I ENTRUST YOU WITH THIS ONEROUS TASK.

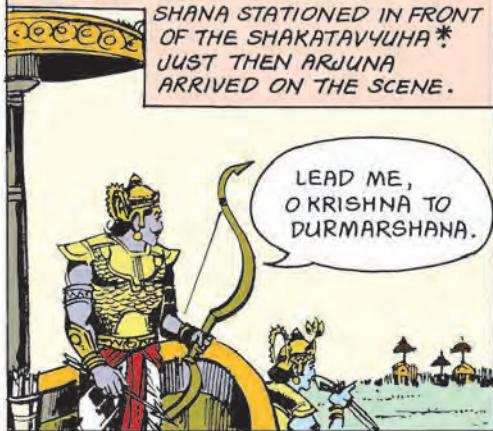
AS YOU WISH,
ARJUNA.



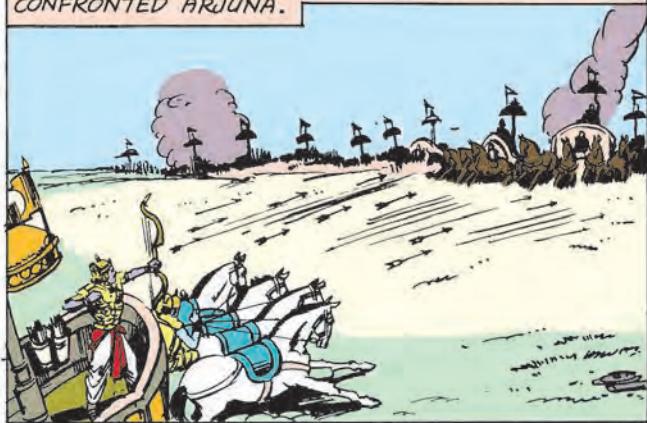
"MEANWHILE AT DAYBREAK, DRONA ARRANGED HIS TROOPS IN A COMPLEX FORMATION.



"THE TRIPLE FORMATION WAS QUITE FORMIDABLE WITH DRONA GUARDING THE LOTUS FORMATION AND DURMARSHANA STATIONED IN FRONT OF THE SHAKATAVYUHA.* JUST THEN ARJUNA ARRIVED ON THE SCENE."



"LIKE A STRONG GALE SCATTERING CLOUDS, ARJUNA'S ARROWS DESTROYED DURMARSHANA'S FORCES. AN ENRAGED DUHSHASANA THEN CONFRONTED ARJUNA."



"SUCH WAS ARJUNA'S SPEED THAT NO ONE COULD MAKE OUT WHEN HE PLACED HIS ARROW, WHEN HE PULLED THE BOWSTRING AND WHEN HE RELEASED THE ARROW. THUS TORTURED, DUHSHASANA RAN FOR PROTECTION TO DRONA."



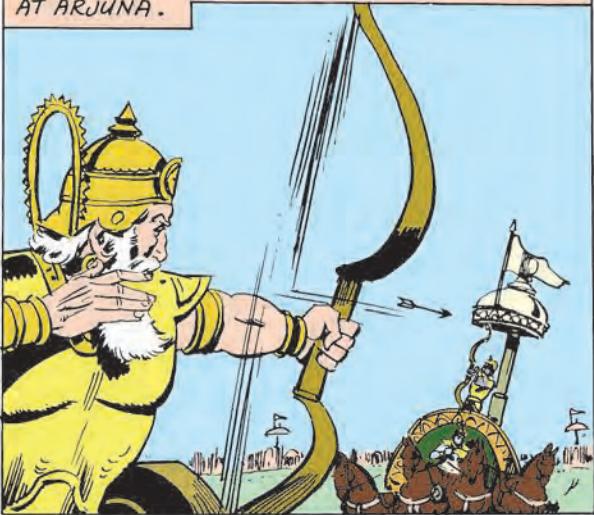
"HAVING BROKEN THROUGH THE CART FORMATION, ARJUNA SWIFTLY REACHED THE LOTUS FORMATION GUARDED BY DRONA."

BLESS ME, THAT I MAY FULFIL MY VOW. I MUST AVENGE THE DEATH OF MY SON.

BUT TO DO SO, YOU MUST FIRST DEFEAT ME.



"DETERMINED TO GUARD HIS FORMATION, DRONA DISCHARGED A SHOWER OF ARROWS AT ARJUNA."



"AN EquALLY DETERMINED ARJUNA FOUGHT BACK. A FURIOUS BATTLE ENSUED."



"KRISHNA REALISED THAT THIS BATTLE WOULD TAKE TOO LONG. HE CAUTIONED ARJUNA —

WE CANNOT TARRY HERE ANY MORE. LET US PROCEED ONWARD.

YOU ARE RIGHT. DO WHAT YOU THINK FIT.



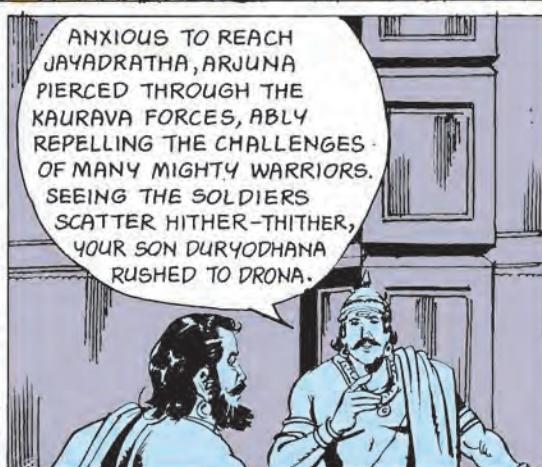
"KRISHNA DEFTLY TOOK THE CHARIOT AROUND DRONA AND RACED PAST HIM."

ARJUNA! NEVER BEFORE HAVE YOU GONE WITHOUT DEFEATING YOUR ENEMY.

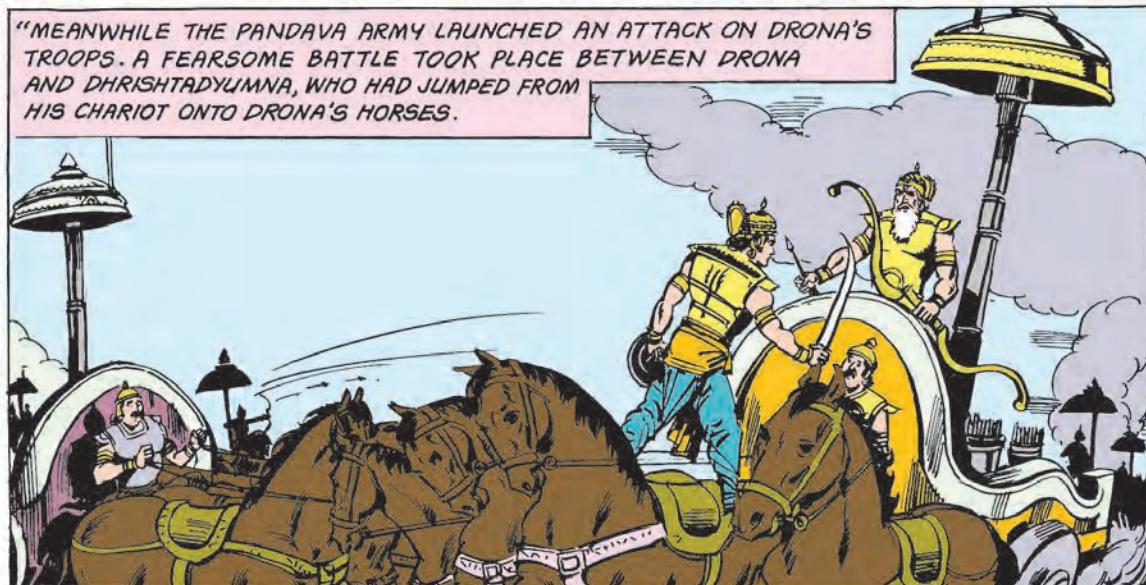
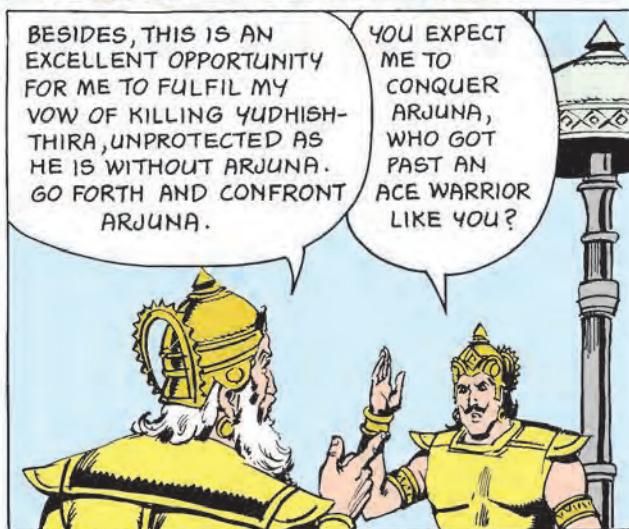
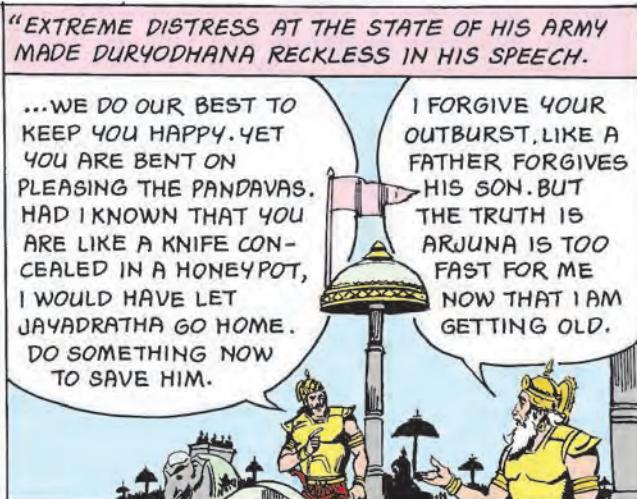
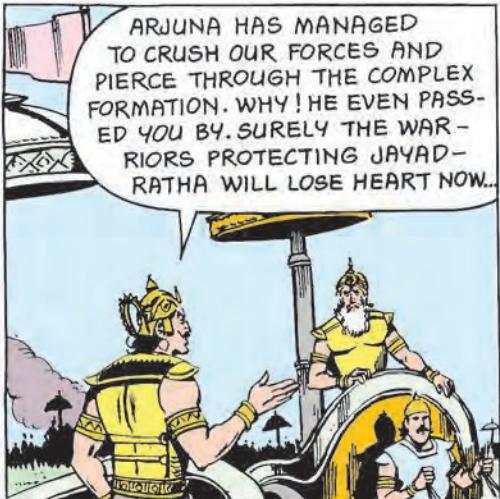
YOU ARE MY GURU, NOT MY ENEMY.



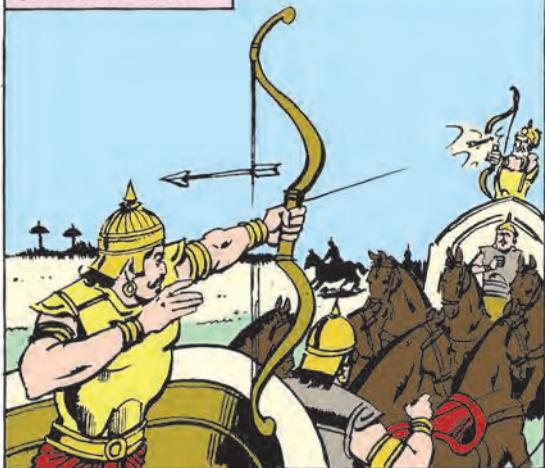
ANXIOUS TO REACH JAYADRATHA, ARJUNA PIERCED THROUGH THE KAURAVA FORCES, ABLY REPELLING THE CHALLENGES OF MANY MIGHTY WARRIORS. SEEING THE SOLDIERS SCATTER HITHER-THITHER, YOUR SON DURYODHANA RUSHED TO DRONA.



ARJUNA FULFILS HIS VOW



"SATYAKI INTERVENED IN TIME TO SAVE DHRISHTADYUMNA'S LIFE. HE BROKE DRONA'S BOW."



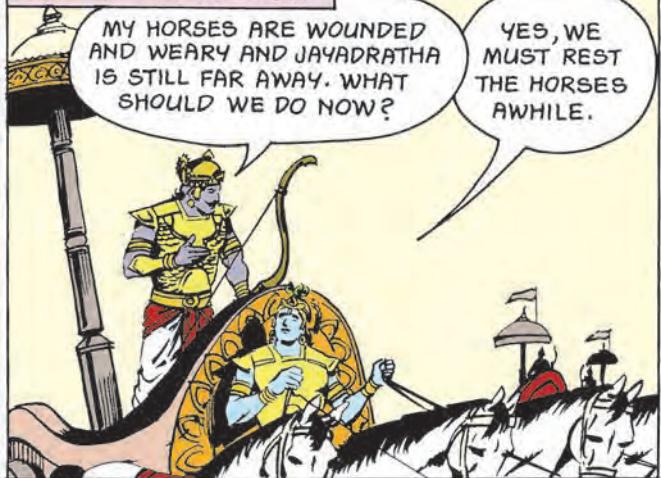
"NO SOONER DID DRONA TAKE UP A NEW BOW, THAN SATYAKI MANAGED TO CUT ITS STRING WITH HIS ARROW."



"SATYAKI MATCHED DRONA'S ONSLAUGHT. SOON, YUDHISHTHIRA, BHEEMA, NAKULA AND SAHADEVA CAME TO HIS HELP AND THE DUEL TURNED TO A GENERAL FIGHT."



"MEANWHILE, ARJUNA WAS SPEEDING TOWARDS JAYADRATHA, CONFRONTING AND QUELLING ALL WHO CAME IN HIS WAY."

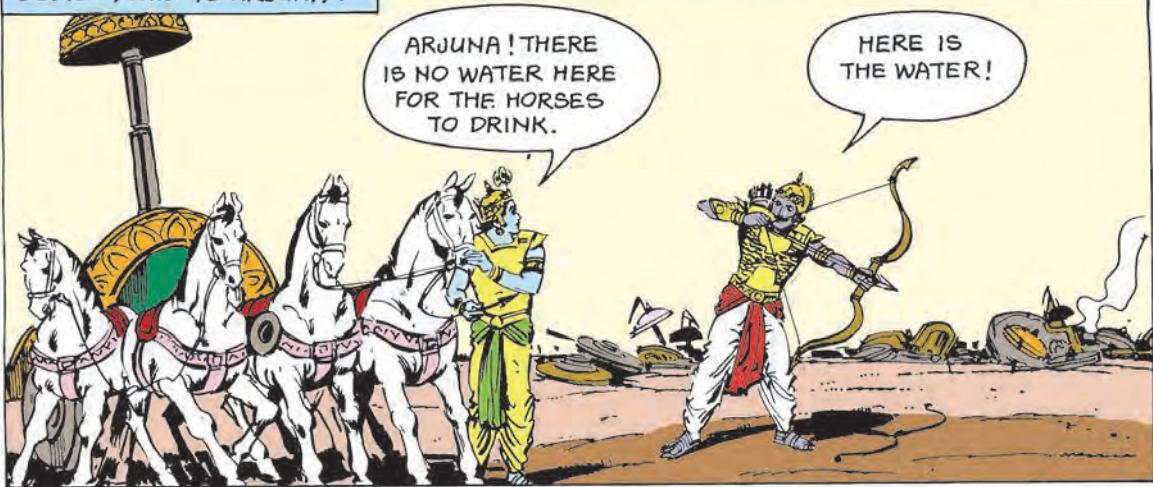


"ARJUNA LEAPED OUT OF THE CHARIOT AND BEGAN TO FIGHT ON FOOT. THE KAURAVAS THOUGHT THIS WAS AN OPPORTUNE MOMENT TO OVERCOME ARJUNA AND ATTACKED HIM FROM ALL SIDES. BUT ARJUNA, ON FOOT, WAS AS SWIFT AS HE WAS ON HIS CHARIOT."

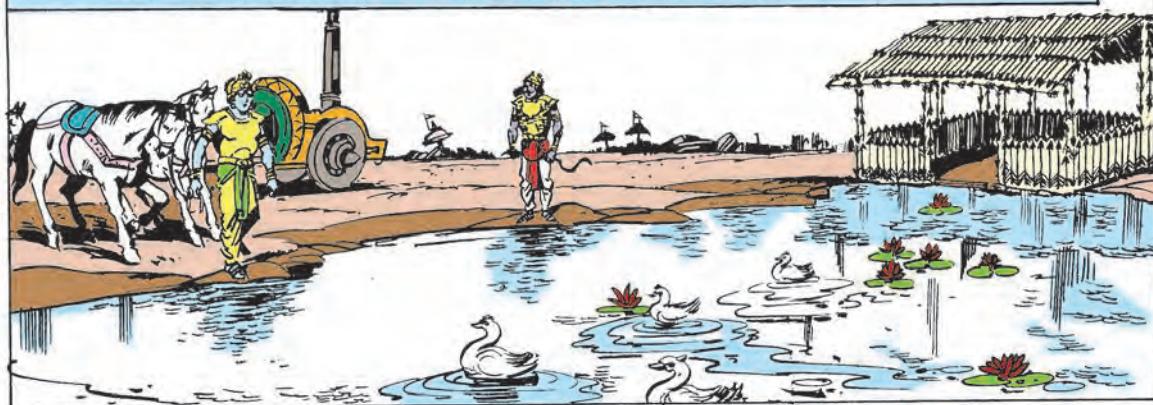


ARJUNA FULFILS HIS VOW

"KRISHNA, WHO WAS SOOTHING THE HORSES AND REMOVING THE ARROWS FROM THEIR BODIES, SAID TO ARJUNA :



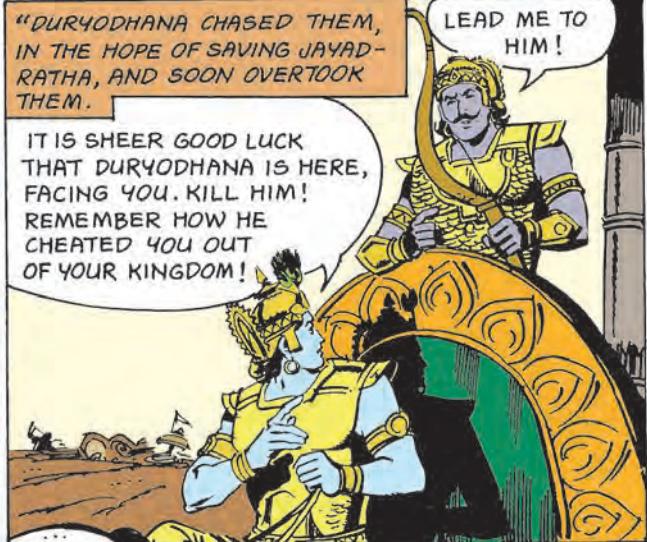
"AS SOON AS HIS ARROW STRUCK THE GROUND, THERE APPEARED A PLACID POOL, WITH BEAUTIFUL LOTUSES AND WATERBIRDS ENHANCING THE VIEW. BESIDES IT, WAS A COTTAGE MADE ENTIRELY OF ARROWS TO WHICH KRISHNA LED THE HORSES. SAFE IN ITS CONFINES, HE REMOVED THEIR ARROWS, MASSAGED THEM AND QUENCHED THEIR THIRST."



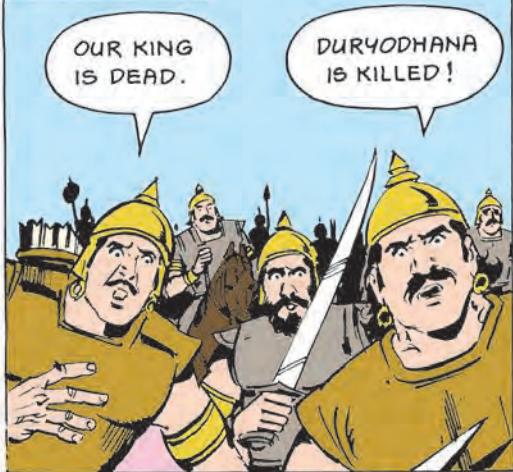
"KRISHNA THEN YOKED THE HORSES BACK TO THE CHARIOT AND RUSHED TO FULFIL THEIR MISSION."



"DURYODHANA CHASED THEM, IN THE HOPE OF SAVING JAYADRATHA, AND SOON OVERTOOK THEM."



"HEARING KRISHNA AND ARJUNA ROAR WITH JOY, THE HEARTS OF KAURAVA SOLDIERS WERE FILLED WITH FOREBODING."



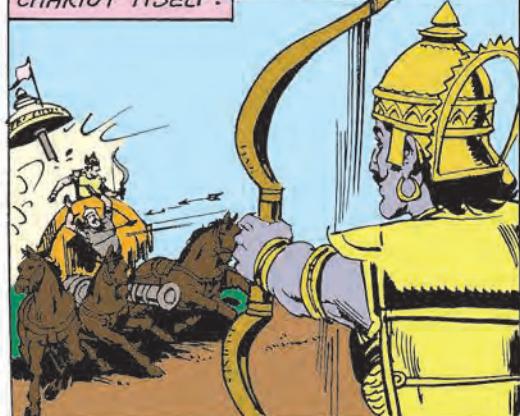
"DURYODHANA QUICKLY REASSURED HIS MEN AND CLAIMED THAT HE WOULD IN FACT KILL HIS ADVERSARIES."



"EVEN AS HE CHALLENGED ARJUNA, DURYODHANA HURLED TEN ARROWS AT KRISHNA'S CHEST AND SEVERAL OTHERS AT ARJUNA. ARJUNA THEN AIMED HIS POWERFUL ARROWS AT DURYODHANA, BUT..."



"...WITH HIS WELL-AIMED ARROWS, ARJUNA SYSTEMATICALLY DESTROYED DURYODHANA'S HORSES, THEN HIS CHARIOTEER AND FINALLY THE CHARIOT ITSELF."



"CLEVERLY, HE AIMED HIS ARROWS UNDER DURYODHANA'S NAILS. UNABLE TO BEAR THE PAIN, DURYODHANA TOOK TO HIS HEELS."



ARJUNA FULFILS HIS VOW

"BUT SOON HE RETURNED, ACCCOMPANIED BY EIGHT MIGHTY WARRIORs, AND SURROUNDED ARJUNA IN ORDER TO PROTECT JAYADRATHA.



"BUT ARJUNA PROVED MORE THAN A MATCH FOR THEM, AND DISPELLED THEIR FORCES.



"MEANWHILE, YUDHISHTHIRA BECAME APPREHENSIVE AT HEARING THE SOUND FROM THE KAURAVA ARMY. HE SAID TO SATYAKI —

ARJUNA, YOUR GURU AND TEACHER APPEARS TO BE IN TROUBLE. YOU MUST GO TO HIS AID.



BUT I CANNOT! ARJUNA HAS ENTRUSTED ME TO GUARD OVER YOU TODAY.

HE HAS LEFT YOU IN MY CARE. I CANNOT LEAVE YOU UNLESS I AM ASSURED OF YOUR PROTECTION.

GO TO ARJUNA. BHEEMA AND THE OTHER BROTHERS WILL UNDOUBTEDLY PROTECT ME.



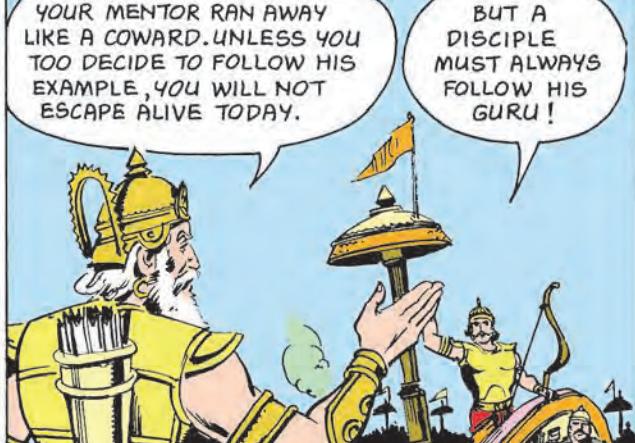
"YUDHISHTHIRA ARRANGED FOR SATYAKI'S CHARIOT TO BE LOADED WITH WEAPONS AND IMPLEMENTS, AND SENT HIM AWAY.



"SATYAKI THEN FORCED HIS WAY THROUGH THE KAURAVA FORMATION, TRYING TO FOLLOW ARJUNA. BUT DRONA STOPPED HIM...

YOUR MENTOR RAN AWAY LIKE A COWARD. UNLESS YOU TOO DECIDE TO FOLLOW HIS EXAMPLE, YOU WILL NOT ESCAPE ALIVE TODAY.

BUT A DISCIPLE MUST ALWAYS FOLLOW HIS GURU!



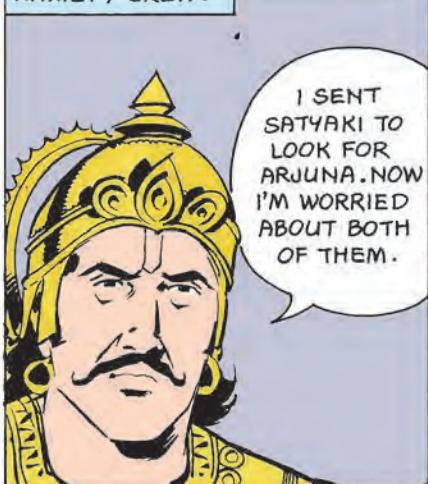
"REALISING THAT DRONA WOULD FOLLOW HIM, SATYAKI DEFTLY GUIDED HIS CHARIOTEER TO MAKE A WAY THROUGH THE VARIOUS ARMIES, CONSTITUTING THE KAURAVA FORCE.



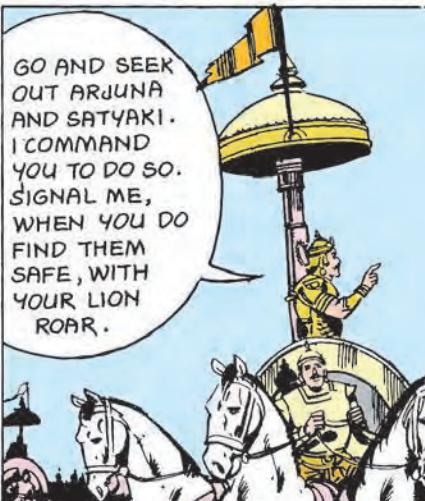
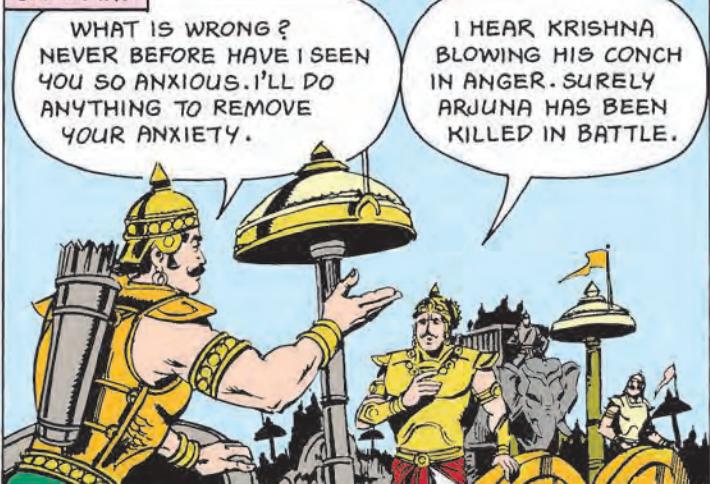
"WHOEVER CAME IN HIS PATH, WAS RUTHLESSLY ATTACKED.



"MEANWHILE, YUDHISHTHIRA'S ANXIETY GREW.



"NEARLY FAINT WITH WORRY, HE APPROACHED BHEEMA.

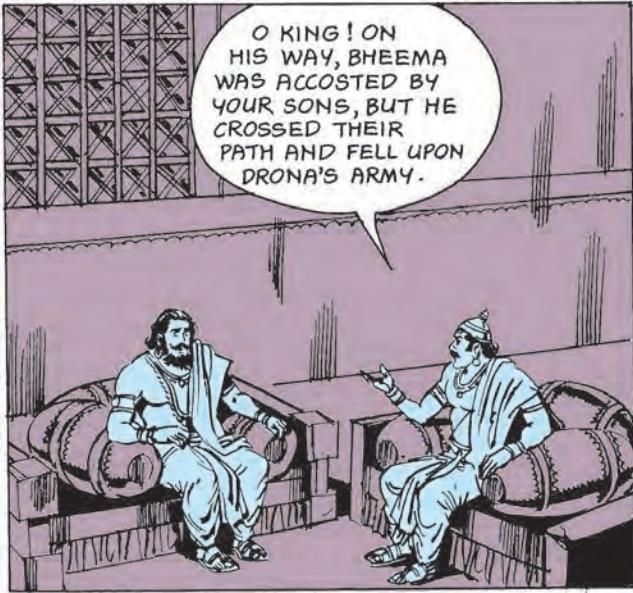


ARJUNA FULFILS HIS VOW

"BHEEMA TOO LEFT, LEAVING YUDHISHTHIRA IN DHRISHTADYUMNA'S CARE —

YOU KNOW THAT DRONA WILL TRY ANYTHING TO CAPTURE YUDHISHTHIRA. PROTECTING HIM IS NOW YOUR TASK FOR THE DAY.

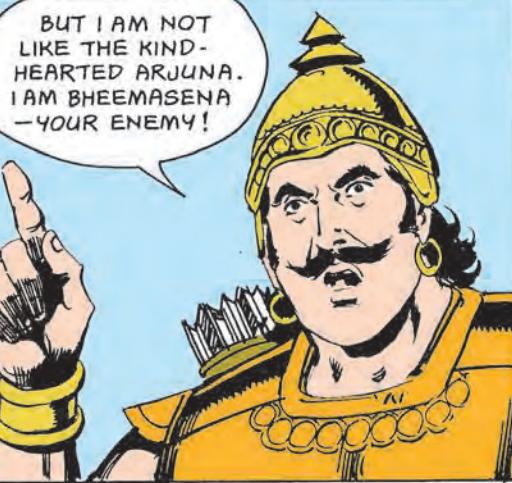
I WILL DO AS YOU WISH.



"EXPECTING BHEEMA TO PAY HIS RESPECTS BEFORE PROCEEDING, DRONA SAID —

WITH MY CONSENT, YOUR BROTHER, ARJUNA PENETRATED THE FORMATION. YOU MAY ALSO DO SO.

ARJUNA DOESN'T NEED YOUR CONSENT THOUGH HE MAY HAVE INDEED SHOWN DUE RESPECT TO YOU.



"BHEEMA LIFTED HIS MACE AND TWIRLED IT AT DRONA, WHO DEFTLY JUMPED OUT OF HIS CHARIOT.



"SEVERAL WARRIOR KINGS THEN RUSHED TO SURROUND BHEEMA, BUT HE BORE THEIR ATTACK LIKE A MIGHTY MOUNTAIN.



"MEANWHILE, CLIMBING ONTO ANOTHER CHARIOT, DRONA AGAIN JOINED THE FRAY. BUT BHEEMA WAS READY.



"JUST AS A MIGHTY GALE TEARS TREES ASUNDER, BHEEMA CRUSHED THE KAURAVAS AND FORGED HIS WAY AHEAD.



"AS SOON AS HE SIGHTED ARJUNA, BHEEMA ROARED LIKE A THUNDERCLOUD...



"... WHICH WAS ECHOED BY ARJUNA AND KRISHNA. THESE FEROCIOUS SOUNDS REACHED YUDHISHTHIRA AND GLADDENED HIS HEART.



"KARNA ATTACKED BHEEMA AND THE BATTLE THAT ENSUED MADE MIGHTY WARRIOR TREMBLE WITH FEAR.



"ALTHOUGH HE EASILY DESTROYED ALL THOSE WHO CAME TO KARNA'S AID, BHEEMA REFRAINED FROM KILLING KARNA AS HE RECALLED THAT ARJUNA HAD VOWED TO DO SO.



ARJUNA FULFILS HIS VOW

"SIMILARLY, THOUGH KARNA REPEATEDLY MADE BHEEMA SWOON WITH HIS ARROWS, HE REMEMBERED HIS PROMISE TO KUNTI AND DID NOT KILL HIM."



"ARJUNA FINALLY DROVE KARNA AWAY WITH SNAKE-LIKE ARROWS, SHOT FROM HIS GANDEEVA."



"SEEING SATYAKI COMING TOWARDS THEM, KRISHNA SAID TO ARJUNA —

LOOK, PARTHA! HERE COMES THE FOLLOWER OF YOUR FOOTSTEPS, WHO IS BOTH A FRIEND AND A PUPIL TO YOU.

TODAY, SEEING HIM DOESN'T MAKE ME HAPPY. TODAY HE WAS TO PROTECT YUDHISHTHIRA.



"SEEING BHORISHRAVA ATTACK SATYAKI, ARJUNA'S WORRY INCREASED.

I HAVE YET TO SLAY JAYADRATHA. BESIDES, I MUST PROTECT SATYAKI AND INQUIRE ABOUT YUDHISHTHIRA.



THE SUN IS ABOUT TO SET. I MUST ACT FAST.



"THE FIGHT BETWEEN SATYAKI AND BHORISHRAVA PROGRESSED FROM AN ARMED COMBAT TO BAREHAND WRESTLING.



"WHEN BHORISHRAVA YANKED SATYAKI'S HAIR, PUT HIS FOOT ON HIS CHEST AND WAS ABOUT TO CUT HIS HEAD OFF, KRISHNA BESEECHED ARJUNA-



"WITH A SHARP ARROW ARJUNA AIMED AT BHORISHRAVA'S RIGHT ARM.



"BHORISHRAVA WAS ENRAGED.



"REALISING HIS MISTAKE, BHORISHRAVA MADE A SEAT OF ARROWS, TOOK UP A YOGIC POSE, AND PLANNED TO GIVE UP HIS LIFE.



ARJUNA FULFILS HIS VOW

"MEANWHILE SATYAKI GAINED CONSCIOUSNESS AND ATTACKED BHOOIRISHRAVA."



"HIS ACTION MET WITH A SALVO OF CRITICISM FROM ALL SIDES."



"AFTER BHOOIRISHRAVA WAS KILLED, ARJUNA SAID TO KRISHNA —

LEAD THE CHARIOT ONTO JAYADRATHA. BEHOLD HOW FAST THE SUN IS SETTING !

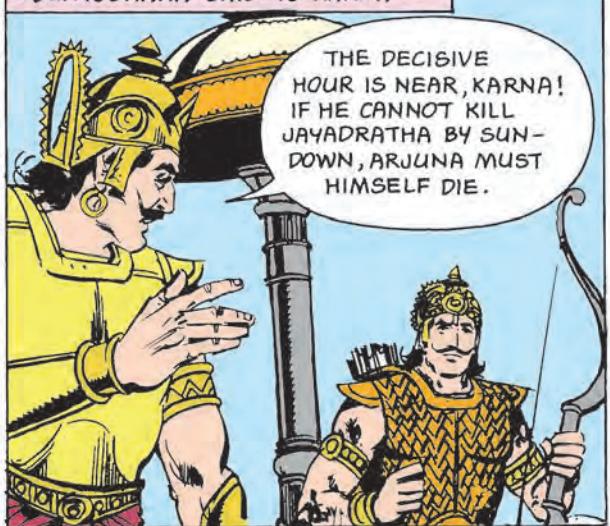


"SEEING THE PACE AT WHICH ARJUNA WAS APPROACHING JAYADRATHA, SEVERAL KAURAVA WARRIOR GOT READY TO REPEL HIM."



"DURYODHANA SAID TO KARNA —

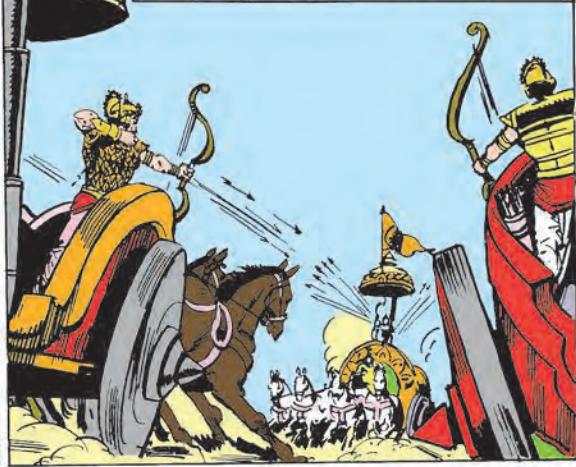
THE DECISIVE HOUR IS NEAR, KARNA! IF HE CANNOT KILL JAYADRATHA BY SUN-DOWN, ARJUNA MUST HIMSELF DIE.





"MEANWHILE ARJUNA WAS ATTACKING THE KAURAVAS WITH ALL HIS MIGHT."

"THE KAURAVAS WERE EQUALLY BENT ON PROTECTING JAYADRATHA."



"ARJUNA AND KARNA ATTACKED EACH OTHER WITH THEIR RAPID, DESTRUCTIVE ARROWS, IN SUCH QUICK SUCCESSION THAT THEY COULD NOT EVEN SEE EACH OTHER."

WAIT PARTHA!
I AM HERE.

O! KARNA.
I AM READY
FOR YOU!

ARJUNA FULFILS HIS VOW

"THE BATTLEFIELD LAY STREWN WITH DEAD, HEADLESS, FALLEN ELEPHANTS, WRECKED CHARIOTS AND THOUSANDS OF WOUNDED SOLDIERS TREMBLING WITH PAIN. MAKING HIS WAY THROUGH ALL THIS, ARJUNA SPED TOWARDS JAYADRATHA. HIS ARROWS CAME IN SUCH QUICK SUCCESSION THAT THEY LOOKED LIKE A HUGE FLOCK OF SWANS FLYING THROUGH THE AIR.



"AS SOON AS HE REACHED WHERE JAYADRATHA WAS, HE SHOT 64 ARROWS AT HIM AND WOUNDED HIM.



"INFURIATED, JAYADRATHA WOUNDED BOTH KRISHNA AND ARJUNA WITH HIS ARROWS AND ONE OF HIS ARROWS PIERCED THROUGH ARJUNA'S BANNER."



"ARJUNA BEHEADED JAYADRATHA'S CHARIOTEER AND WITH ANOTHER ARROW BROUGHT DOWN JAYADRATHA'S BANNER AS WELL AS THE POST."

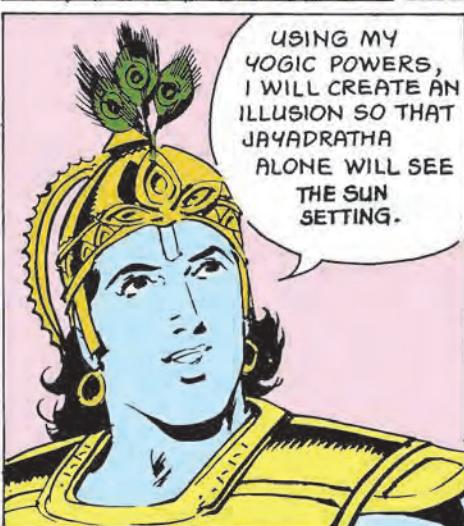


"SEEING THE COURSE OF THE SUN IN THE WEST, KRISHNA TOLD ARJUNA —

JAYADRATHA IS PROTECTED BY SIX WARRIORS YOU MUST KILL THEM FIRST.



USING MY YOGIC POWERS, I WILL CREATE AN ILLUSION SO THAT JAYADRATHA ALONE WILL SEE THE SUN SETTING.



CONSIDERING HIMSELF SAFE AFTER SUNSET, HE WILL EXPOSE HIMSELF.

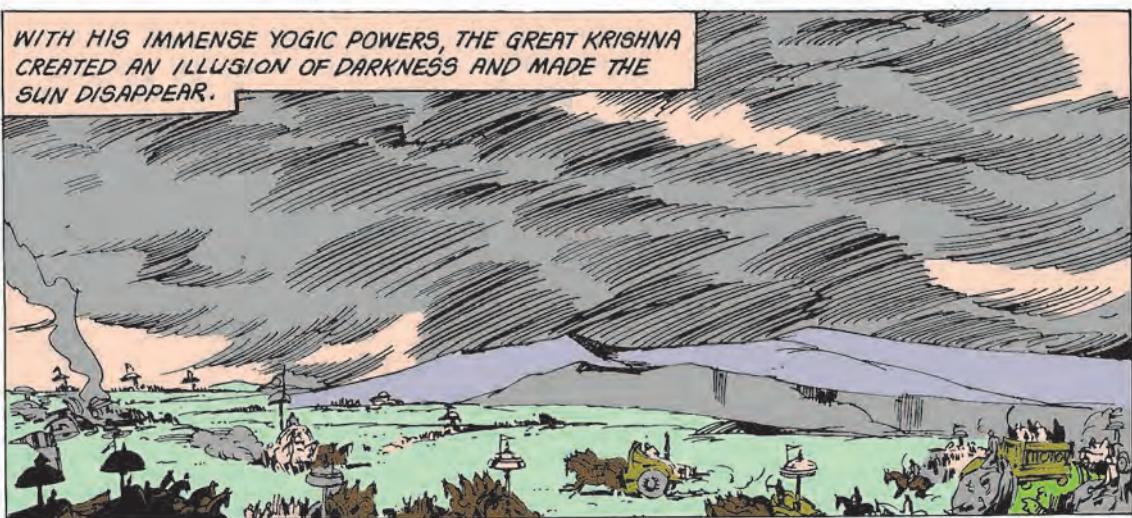


AT THAT OPPORTUNE MOMENT, ATTACK AND KILL HIM. DON'T BE DISMAYED IF THE SUN APPEARS TO HAVE SET.

AS YOU WISH, OH LORD!



WITH HIS IMMENSE YOGIC POWERS, THE GREAT KRISHNA CREATED AN ILLUSION OF DARKNESS AND MADE THE SUN DISAPPEAR.



THE KAURAVA ARMY REJOICED AT THE APPARENT SUNSET.

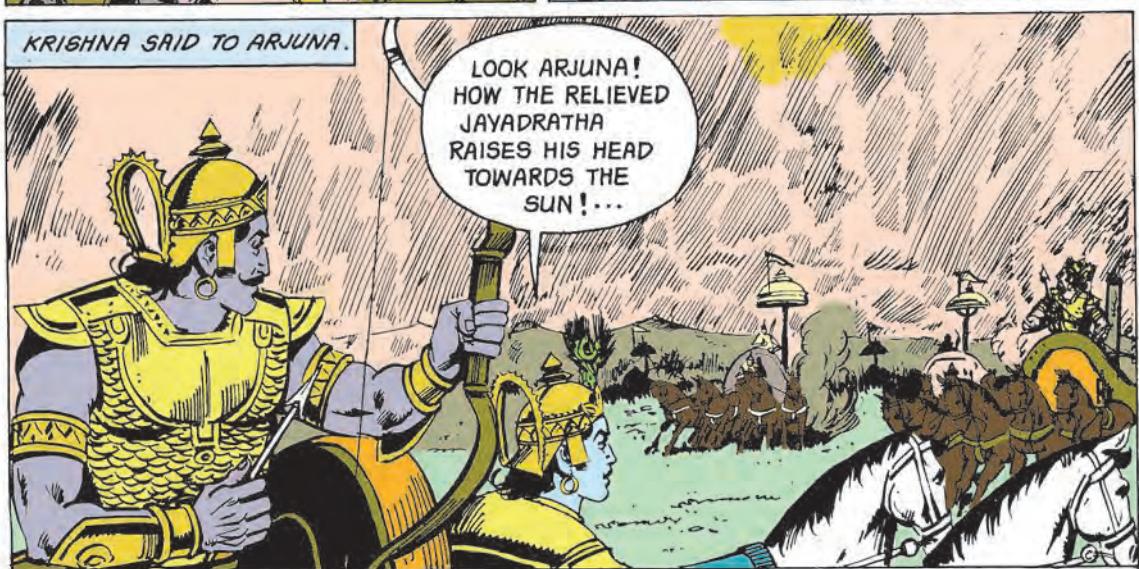


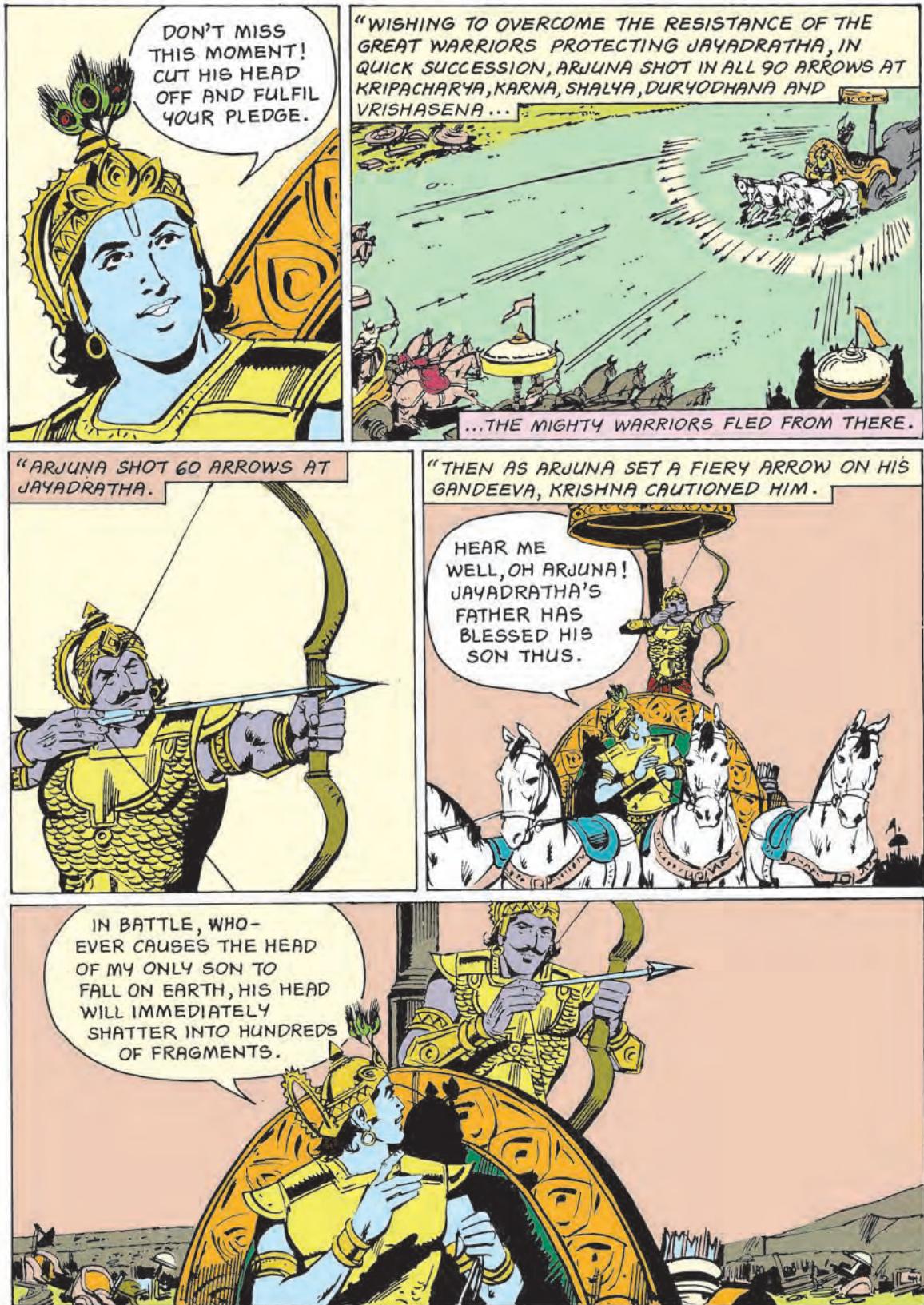
OH KING. SO ENGROSSED WERE THEY IN CELEBRATING THE END OF THE DAY, NONE OF YOUR SOLDIERS CARED TO LOOK AT THE SUN. BUT JAYADRATHA DID SO.

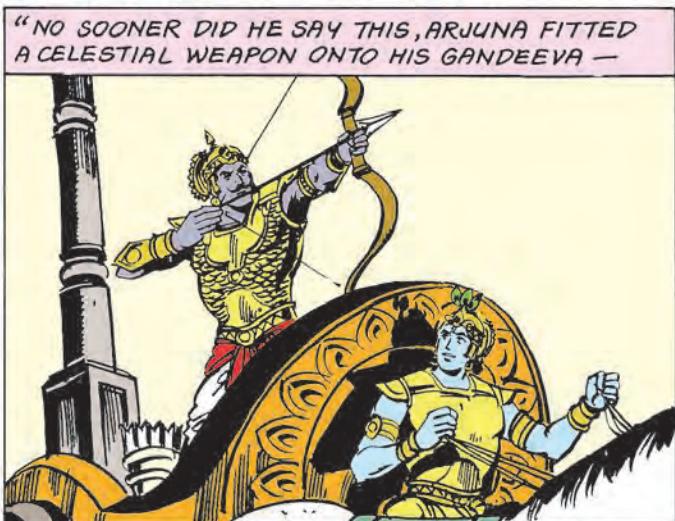
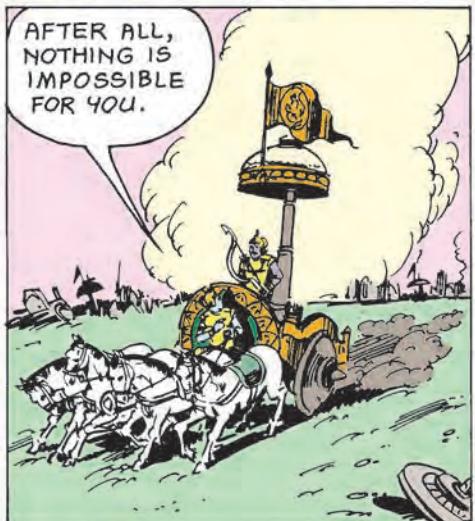
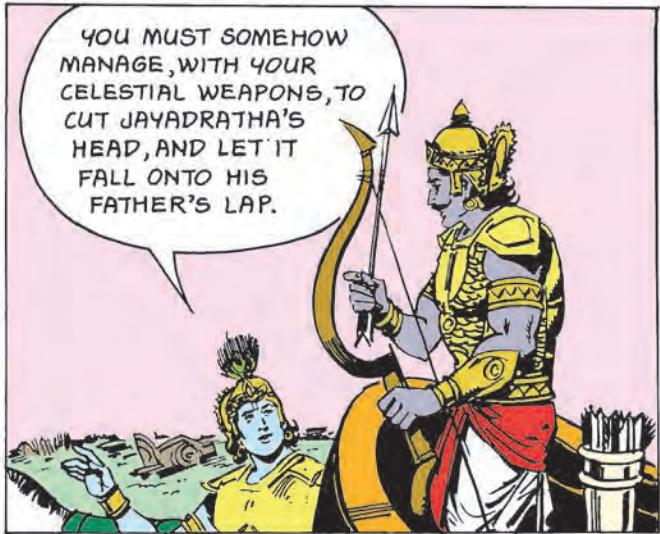
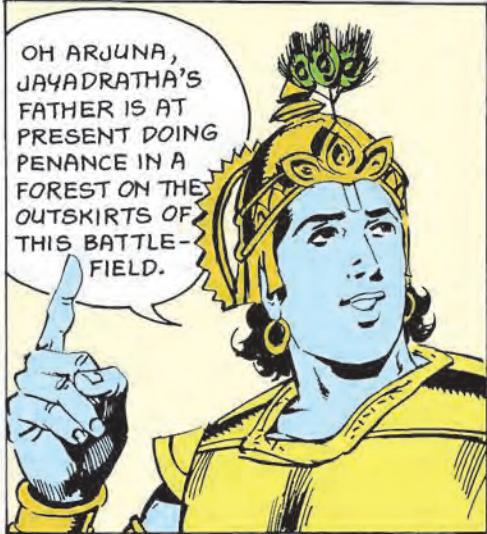


KRISHNA SAID TO ARJUNA.

LOOK ARJUNA!
HOW THE RELIEVED
JAYADRATHA
RAISES HIS HEAD
TOWARDS THE
SUN!...







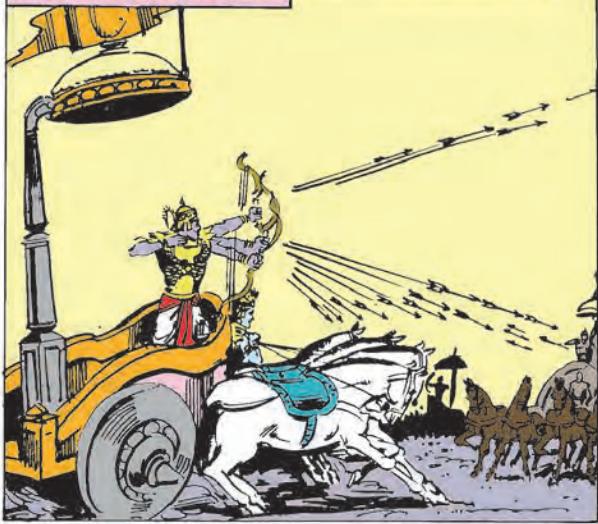
"THE ARROW SHOT OUT AND, LIKE A HAWK PICKING UP A NESTLING ATOP A TREE, CUT
AND CARRIED JAYADRATHA'S HEAD SKYWARDS.



"WITH A NUMBER OF SUCCESSIVE ARROWS, ARJUNA SENT THE HEAD HIGHER AND HIGHER..."



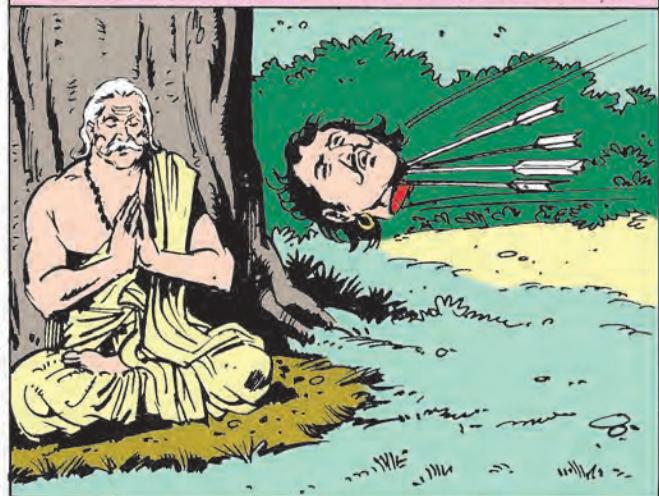
"... WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY FIGHTING SIX MIGHTY WARRIORs."



"THE ARROWS CARRIED THE HEAD TO THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE BATTLEFIELD..."



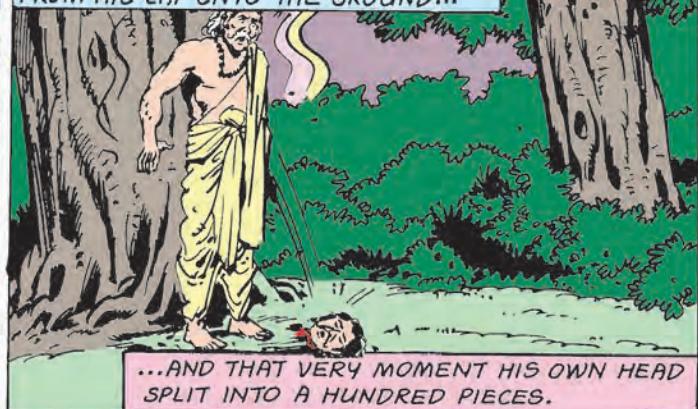
"...WHERE JAYADRATHA'S FATHER SAT IN PENANCE."



"HE WAS OFFERING HIS EVENING PRAYERS TO THE SUN, WHEN THE HEAD OF HIS SON FELL ON HIS LAP."



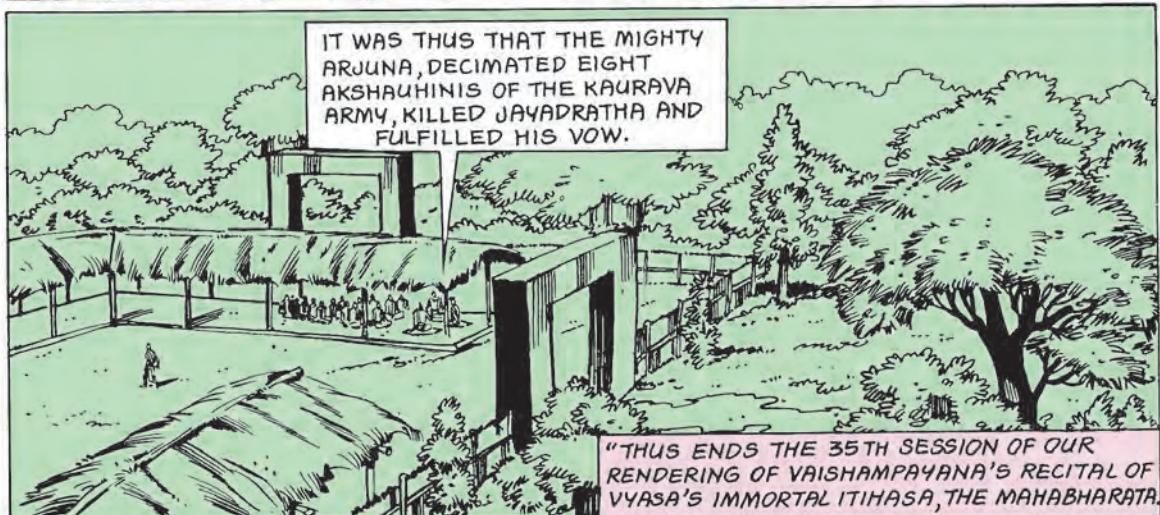
"UNAWARE OF ITS PRESENCE, WHEN HE GOT UP AFTER COMPLETING HIS PRAYER, THE HEAD FELL FROM HIS LAP ONTO THE GROUND..."



ARJUNA FULFILS HIS VOW



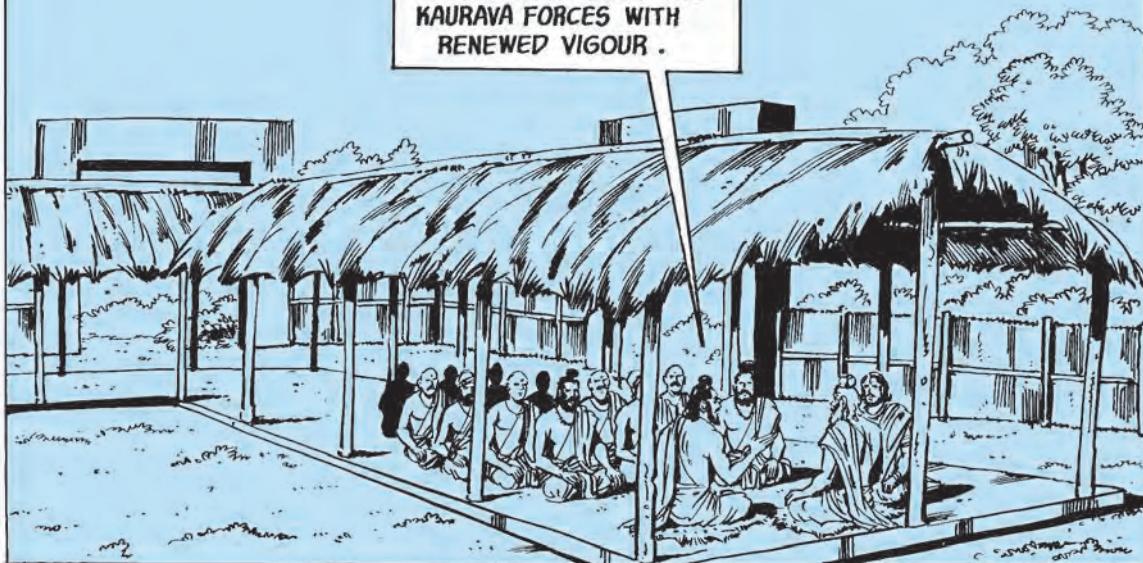
"IT WAS THEN THAT THE KAURAVAS REALISED THAT THEY HAD BEEN TAKEN IN BY THE ILLUSION OF DARKNESS CREATED BY KRISHNA."



Mahabharata - 36

THE BATTLE AT MIDNIGHT

AFTER FULFILLING HIS VOW TO KILL JAYADRATHA BEFORE SUNDOWN, ARJUNA BEGAN TO ATTACK THE KAURAVA FORCES WITH RENEWED VIGOUR.



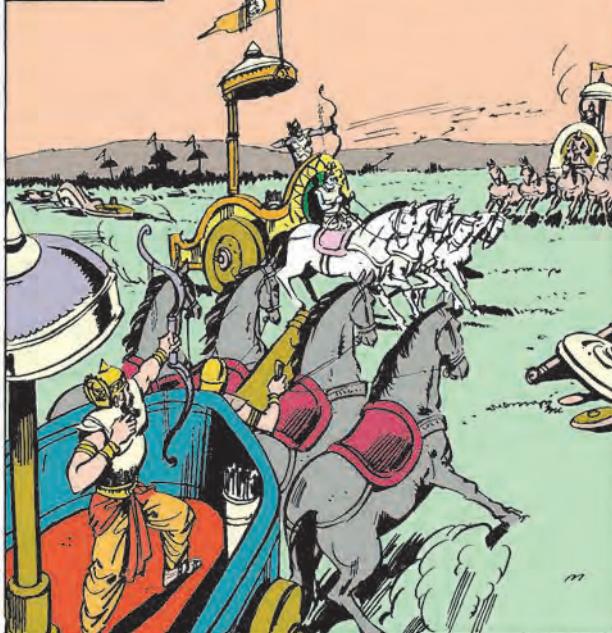
"ANXIOUS TO LEARN THE DETAILS OF THE BATTLE, THE BLIND PATRIARCH DHRITARASHTRA ASKED SANJAYA -



HOW DID MY SONS
REACT TO THE SLAYING
OF JAYADRATHA ?

THEY COULD
NOT CONTAIN
THEIR ANGER...

"...INFURIATED BY THE KILLING OF JAYADRATHA,
KRIPACHARYA AND ASHWATTHAMA ATTACKED
ARJUNA ...

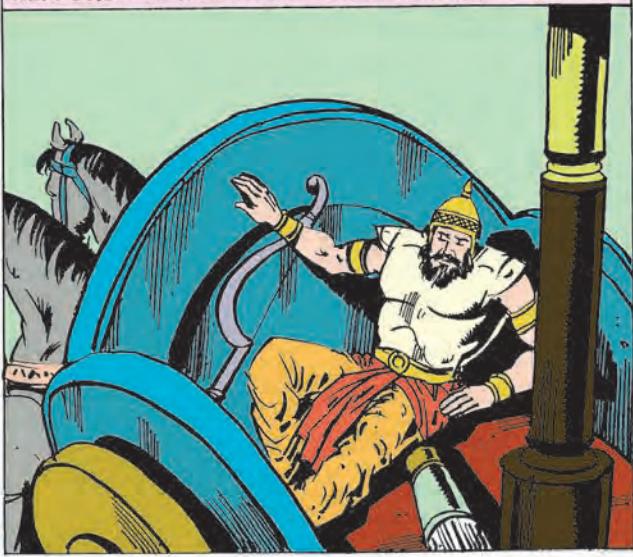


THE BATTLE AT MIDNIGHT

"RELUCTANT TO ATTACK HIS GURU, ARJUNA USED THE MILDEST OF ARROWS ...



"...BUT SO NUMEROUS WERE THEY THAT THEY RENDERED KRIPACHARYA UNCONSCIOUS .



"ARJUNA THOUGHT THAT KRIPACHARYA WAS DEAD. HE WAS SMITTEN WITH GUILT .

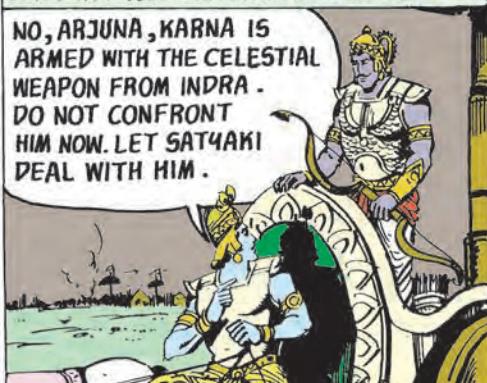


"KARNA SEIZED THE OPPORTUNITY TO ATTACK THE REPENTANT ARJUNA. SATYAKI AND OTHER WARRIOR RUSHED TO CONFRONT HIM .

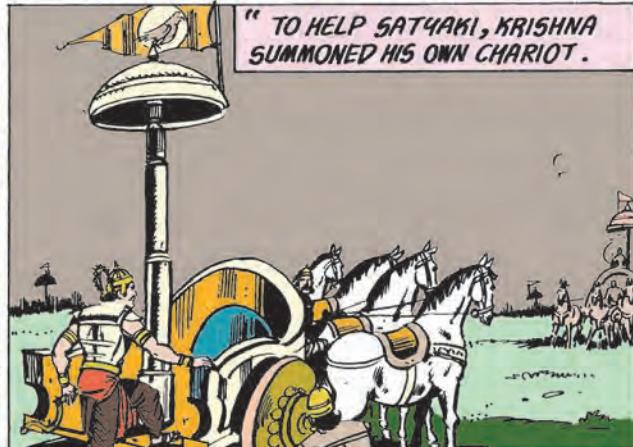


"KRISHNA HOWEVER PREVENTED ARJUNA FROM FIGHTING WITH KARNA .

NO, ARJUNA, KARNA IS ARMED WITH THE CELESTIAL WEAPON FROM INDRA . DO NOT CONFRONT HIM NOW. LET SATYAKI DEAL WITH HIM .



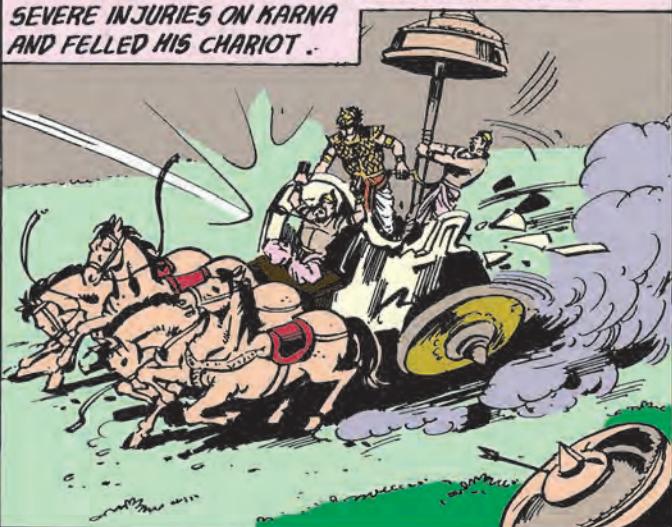
"TO HELP SATYAKI, KRISHNA SUMMONED HIS OWN CHARIOT .



"A FEARFUL BATTLE ENSUED BETWEEN SATYAKI AND KARNA .



"WITH SHARP IRON ARROWS SATYAKI INFlicted SEVERE INJURIES ON KARNA AND FELLED HIS CHARIOT .



THEN HE REMEMBERED ARJUNA'S VOW TO KILL KARNA . HE THEREFORE SPARED KARNA'S LIFE .



"AS THE SUN BEGAN TO SET , KRISHNA AND ARJUNA PROCEEDED TO MEET YUDHISHTHIRA .

ARJUNA HAS FULFILLED HIS VOW . JAYADRATHA IS DEAD !

YOUR WORDS FILL MY HEART WITH JOY .



YUDHISHTHIRA SAID TO KRISHNA -

IT IS YOU WHO MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR ARJUNA TO FULFIL HIS VOW , O LORD OF THE UNIVERSE !

NO YUDHISHTHIRA , YOUR AUSTERITIES AND RIGHTEOUS CONDUCT AND ARJUNA'S SKILL AS A MATCHLESS WARRIOR ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS VICTORY .



" JAYADRATHA'S DEATH HAD BROKEN DURYODHANA'S SPIRIT .

I AM NOW CONVINCED THAT NONE CAN EQUAL ARJUNA'S PROWESS .



"HE THEN WENT TO DRONA -

HOW MANY KINGS HAVE GIVEN UP THEIR LIVES FOR ME ! EVEN THE INVINCIBLE BHEESHMA IS LYING SUPINE IN THE BATTLEFIELD. SEVEN DIVISIONS OF OUR ARMY ARE DESTROYED.

I HAVE ALWAYS TOLD YOU THAT ARJUNA IS INVINCIBLE. HE COULD KILL JAYADRATHA IN SPITE OF SO MANY OF YOU STRIVING HARD TO PROTECT HIM. YET, I ASSURE YOU, YOU WILL NOT FIND ME WANTING IN MY EFFORTS. TILL I KILL ALL THE PANDAVAS, I WILL NOT TAKE OFF MY ARMOUR.

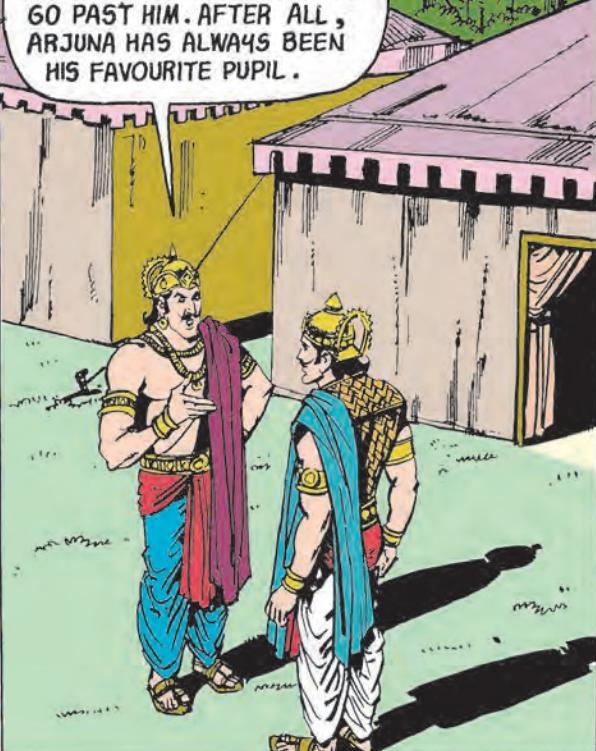


I WILL PENETRATE THE ENEMY FORCES. MEANWHILE PROTECT YOUR MEN, FOR TODAY THE BATTLE MAY CONTINUE INTO THE NIGHT.



"AS THEY WALKED TOWARDS THE BATTLEFIELD, DURYODHANA CONFIDED IN KARNA -

DRONA HAD PROMISED TO PROTECT JAYADRATHA, BUT HE ALLOWED ARJUNA TO GO PAST HIM. AFTER ALL, ARJUNA HAS ALWAYS BEEN HIS FAVOURITE PUPIL.



THAT IS NOT FAIR ! THE ACHARYA DID TRY HIS BEST. BUT ARJUNA MANAGED TO GET PAST HIM. I FEEL DRONACHARYA IS NOT TO BE BLAMED.



COME, LET US NOT TRY TO OPPOSE DESTINY, BUT LET US DO OUR BEST IN BATTLE.



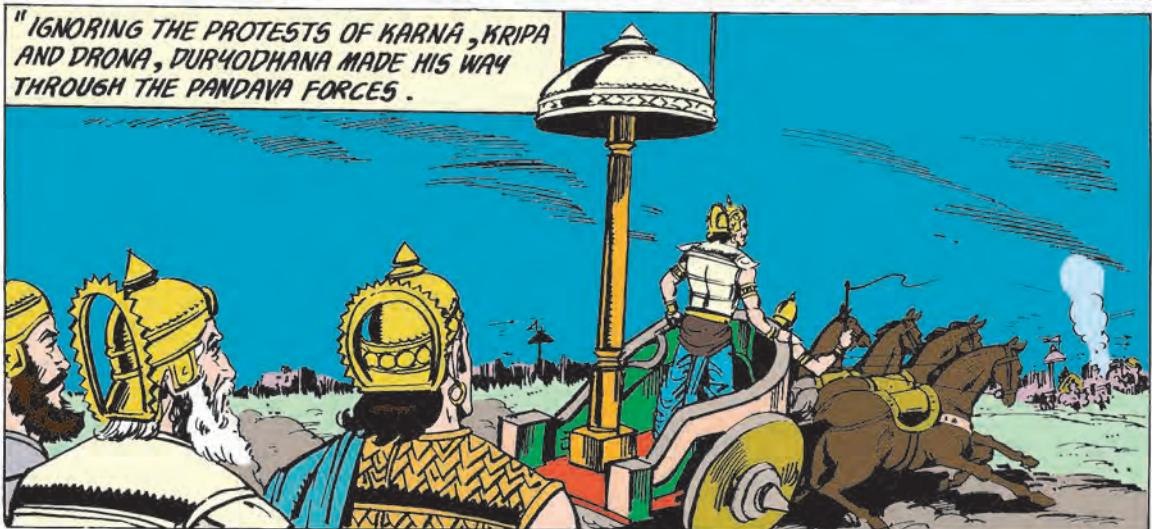
" WHILE TALKING, THEY SAW THE ARMIES ON THE BATTLEFIELD.



" BECAUSE OF THE FADING LIGHT, THEY COULD NOT SEE CLEARLY THE THOUSANDS OF ARROWS DISCHARGED BY THE WARRIORs.



" IGNORING THE PROTESTS OF KARNA, KRIPA AND DRONA, DURYODHANA MADE HIS WAY THROUGH THE PANDAVA FORCES.



THE BATTLE AT MIDNIGHT

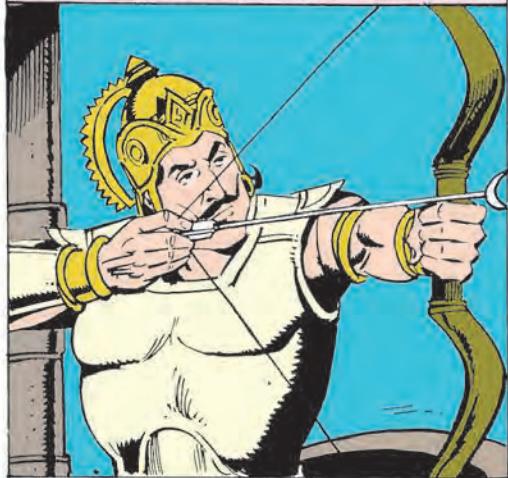
"AS THE MORNING SUN DISPELS THE DARKNESS , DURYODHANA DESTROYED MANY PANDAVA SOLDIERS .



"JUST THEN YUDHISHTHIRA CHARGED TOWARDS HIM .



"AND THE TWO WERE LOCKED IN COMBAT .



"WITH HIS POWERFUL ARROWS , DURYODHANA INFILCTED INJURIES ON YUDHISHTHIRA , HIS CHARIOTEER AND ALL THE FOUR HORSES .



"DURYODHANA WAS ALSO SERIOUSLY INJURED BY YUDHISHTHIRA'S BARRAGE OF ARROWS AND HE SAT DOWN IN THE CHARIOT .



SOON THE DUEL TURNED INTO A GENERAL FIGHT .



"AS THE MIGHTY WARRIORS LIKE NAKULA, SAHADEVA AND VIRATA ATTACKED DRONA WITH THEIR ARMIES ...



"THE NIGHT TURNED DARK AND OMINOUS ENOUGH TO PUT FEAR IN THE HEARTS OF THE BRAVEST OF WARRIORS .



THE SILENCE OF THE NIGHT WAS BROKEN BY THE PIERCING SOUND FROM BUGLES , THE TRUMPETING OF ELEPHANTS, THE NEIGHING OF HORSES AND THE HOWLING OF JACKALS.



"BHEEMA WENT ABOUT ATTACKING DHRITARASHTRA'S SONS WITH SLAPS AND BLOWS USING HIS BARE HANDS .



MEANWHILE SOMADATTA ATTACKED SATYAKI TO Avenge THE DEATH OF HIS SON, BHOORISHRAVA .



"HE SAID TO SATYAKI -
HOW COULD YOU ATTACK
MY SON WHEN HE WAS
UNARMED ?

SO WHAT ! AND
NOW I WILL KILL
YOU TOO .



THE BATTLE AT MIDNIGHT

" SOMADATTA FAINTED AS A RESULT OF SATYAKI'S ATTACK AND HAD TO BE CARRIED AWAY .



" SEEING THIS , AN ENRAGED DRONA RUSHED TOWARDS SATYAKI .



" SO FURIOUS WAS HE THAT ANYONE WHO COME IN HIS WAY WAS INSTANTLY KILLED .



" ARJUNA THEN SAID TO KRISHNA -



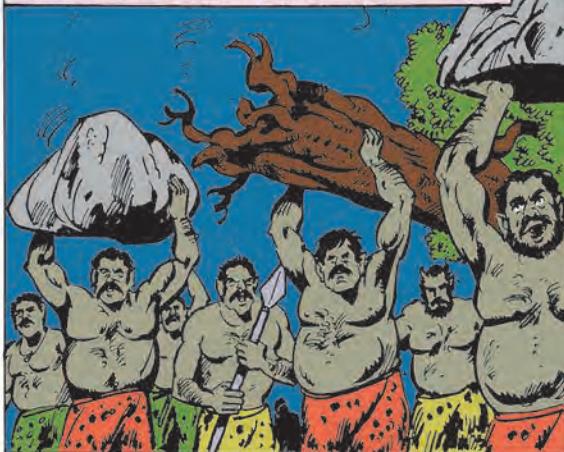
" BHEEMA TOO FOLLOWED .



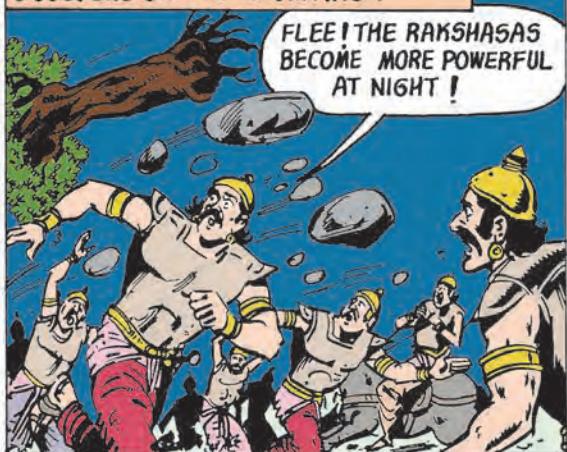
" JUST THEN GHATOTKACHA , BHEEMA'S SON , APPEARED ON THE SCENE .



"HE WAS ACCCOMPANIED BY HIS ARMY OF RAKSHASAS. HIS ROAR MADE EVEN THE ELEPHANTS TREMBLE WITH FEAR."



"HIS VERY SIGHT FRIGHTENED THE ENEMY FORCES. HIS ARMY STARTED RAINING BOULDERS ON THE KAURAVAS."



"GHATOTKACHA WITH HIS MAGICAL POWERS CREATED AN AWESOME ILLUSION. WHILE OTHERS FLED IN FEAR, ASHWATTHAMA ALONE WAS UNDAUNTED ..."



... AND HE DESTROYED THE ILLUSION. THE ENRAGED GHATOTKACHA, SMITTEN BY THE ARROWS OF ASHWATTHAMA ...



... TOOK UP A CHAKRA** AND HURLED IT AT ASHWATTHAMA .



THE BATTLE AT MIDNIGHT

"WITH HIS WELL-AIMED ARROWS, ASHWATTHAMA NIMBLY CAST IT ASUNDER .



"GHATOTKACHA'S SON NOW JOINED THE FIGHT. ALSO USING MAGIC .



"BUT HE SOON SUCCUMBED TO ASHWATTHAMA'S ARROWS. GHATOTKACHA WAS FURIOUS .

ASHWATTHAMA , JUST WAIT ! YOU CANNOT ESCAPE ALIVE TODAY !

OH ! GO AND FIGHT WITH SOMEONE ELSE. DO NOT IRRITATE ME OR ELSE ...



"GHATOTKACHA TRIED VARIOUS TRICKS AND CREATED ILLUSION AFTER ILLUSION TO SCARE ASHWATTHAMA .



"A CALM AND COLLECTED ASHWATTHAMA ASSURED THE WORRIED DURYODHANA .

LEAVE THIS TO ME, O KING ! GO AND REASSURE YOUR SOLDIERS .



WITH AN ARROW THAT RESEMBLED THE MACE OF YAMA* ASHWATTHAMA WOUNDED GHATOTKACHA, WHO FELL TO THE GROUND .



* GOD OF DEATH

"MANY KINGS IN THE PANDAVA ARMY FELT THAT GHATOTKACHA HAD BEEN KILLED, AND LOST THE WILL TO FIGHT. BHEEMA THEN ATTACKED THE MAURAVA ARMY WITH RENEWED VIGOUR."



"SANJAYA NARRATED THE GRUESOME DETAILS."

TEN OF YOUR BRAVE SONS ATTACKED BHEEMA BUT HE KILLED ALL OF THEM.



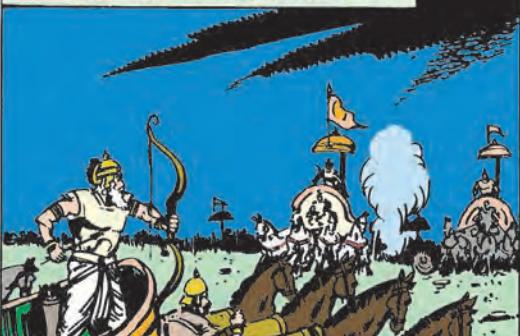
"MEANWHILE DRONA RAINED VARIOUS CELESTIAL WEAPONS ON YUDHISHTHIRA, INCLUDING THE BRAHMASTRA*."



"BUT HIS EFFORTS WERE FUTILE SINCE YUDHISHTHIRA MATCHED HIM WEAPON FOR WEAPON, AND FENDED OFF HIS ATTACK."



"DRONA NOW TURNED AWAY AND ATTACKED DRUPADA'S ARMY ONLY TO FIND ARJUNA AND BHEEMA CONFRONTING HIM."



"KAURAVA SOLDIERS ENFEEBLED BY LACK OF SLEEP AND TERRIFIED BY THE DARK NIGHT, RAN AMOK UNDER ARJUNA'S ONSLAUGHT."



* A WEAPON INVOKING THE POWER OF BRAHMA .

"ADDRESSING KARNA, DURYODHANA SAID—

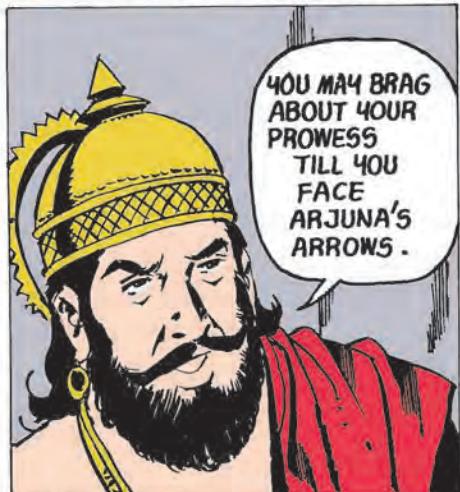
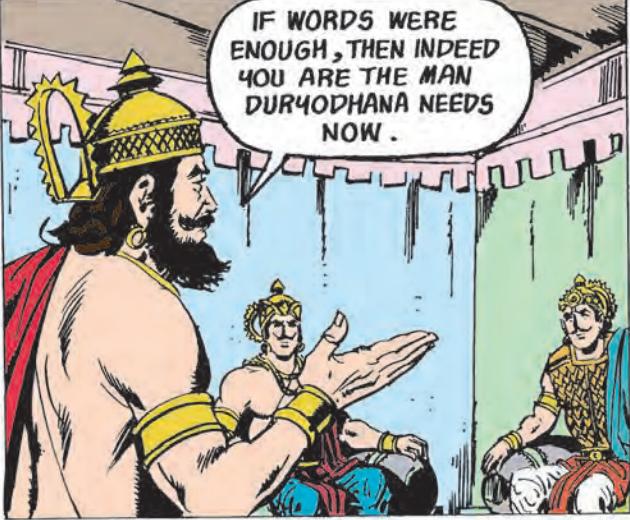
KARNA, MY FRIEND,
THE TIME HAS
COME FOR YOU
TO PROVE YOUR
FRIENDSHIP. COME
TO THE RESCUE
OF MY MEN.

REST ASSURED,
I SWEAR I WILL
KILL THE
PANDAVAS AND
PANCHALAS AND
LAY THE EARTH
AT YOUR FEET TO
RULE OVER.



"KRIPACHARYA INTERVENED WITH A MOCKING SMILE—

IF WORDS WERE
ENOUGH, THEN INDEED
YOU ARE THE MAN
DURYODHANA NEEDS
NOW.



YOU MAY BRAG
ABOUT YOUR
PROWESS
TILL YOU
FACE
ARJUNA'S
ARROWS.

JUST AS BRAHMANAS ARE
RENNED FOR THEIR
SERMONS, KSHATRIYAS FOR
THEIR VALOUR, YOUR PROWESS
IS IN BUILDING CASTLES IN
THE AIR.



"WHEN KRIPACHARYA CONTINUED HIS
TAUNTS, KARNA FLARED UP.



ONE MORE WORD
FROM YOU AND
I WILL CUT OFF
YOUR TONGUE.

ENRAGED BY KARNA'S VERBAL DUEL WITH HIS
UNCLE KRIPA, ASHWATTHAMA RUSHED TOWARDS
KARNA WITH HIS DRAWN SWORD RAISED UP. BUT
DURYODHANA SAID—

SHED THIS ANGER.
WE HAVE A GREAT
TASK BEFORE
US.

WE WILL FORGIVE KARNA
NOW. BUT SOON ARJUNA
WILL SHATTER HIS EGO.



"AS SOON AS KARNA TOOK UP ARMS, THE PANDAVA ARMY ATTACKED HIM WITH FURY.

KILL KARNA .

DESTROY THIS FOOLISH MAN!



"BUT KARNA AT HIS BEST WAS TERROR INCARNATE.

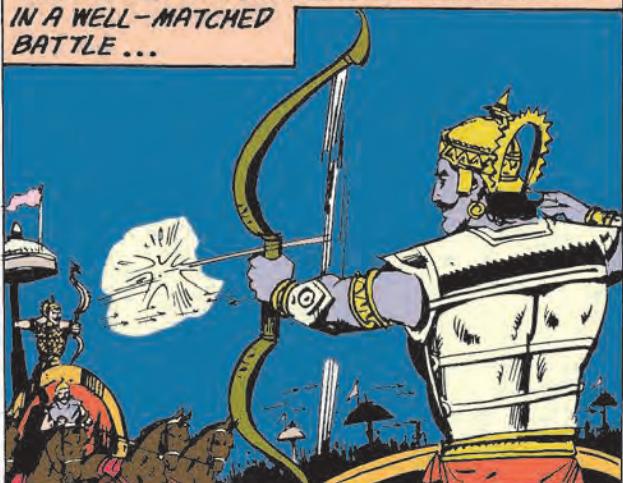


"SEEING KARNA'S PROWESS, DURYODHANA TOLD ASHWATTHAMA—

GREAT IS KARNA'S VALOUR. LOOK! ARJUNA IS MOVING TOWARDS HIM NOW. SEE THAT KARNA IS PROTECTED FROM HIM.



"KARNA AND ARJUNA WERE SOON ENGAGED IN A WELL-MATCHED BATTLE ...



"... TILL ARJUNA CUT OFF KARNA'S BOW STRING, KILLED HIS CHARIOTEER AND ALL THE FOUR HORSES. KARNA THEN RAN TOWARDS THE CHARIOT OF KRIPACHARYA.



"THE KAURAVA ARMY RAN HELTER-SKELTER IN FEAR OF ARJUNA. DURYODHANA SAID—

DO NOT RUN AWAY, MY BRAVE MEN! I WILL KILL ARJUNA.



"KRIPA CONFIDED IN ASHWATTHAMA.

IN HIS RAGE , DURYODHANA WANTS TO CONFRONT ARJUNA . STOP HIM BEFORE HE GETS KILLED.



"ASHWATTHAMA AT ONCE WENT TO DURYODHANA.

DO NOT INSULT ME BY RUSHING TO FIGHT ARJUNA WHEN I AM ALIVE. LEAVE THAT TO ME .

AH ! BUT BOTH YOU AND YOUR FATHER ARE BESET WITH YOUR LOVE FOR THE PANDAVAS . ELSE YOU WOULD HAVE ROUTED THEIR ARMY WITH EASE .



"ASHWATTHAMA REALISED THAT DURYODHANA WAS SPEAKING IN ANGER .

OF COURSE WE DO LOVE THE PANDAVAS . BUT IN THE BATTLEFIELD WE FIGHT THEM WITH ALL OUR MIGHT . JUST WATCH MY PROWESS TODAY .



"TRUE TO HIS WORD , ASHWATTHAMA CHALLENGED THE ENEMY FORCES .

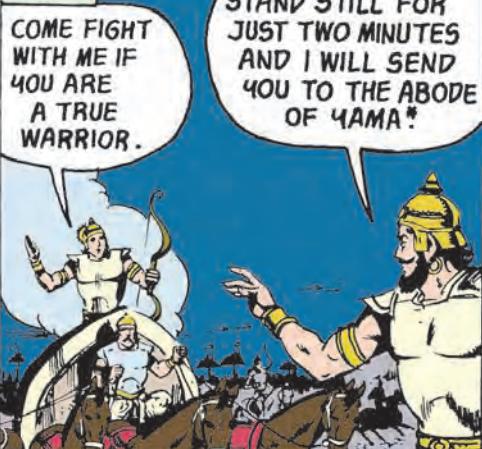
COME , RAIN YOUR ARROWS ON ME !



"SEEING THE PANDAVA SOLDIERS FLEEING UNDER ASHWATTHAMA'S ATTACK , DHRISHTADYUMNA CHALLENGED HIM —

COME FIGHT WITH ME IF YOU ARE A TRUE WARRIOR .

STAND STILL FOR JUST TWO MINUTES AND I WILL SEND YOU TO THE ABODE OF YAMA !



"THE DUEL OF WORDS BETWEEN ASHWATTHAMA AND DHRISHTADYUMNA WAS AS FIERCE AS THE ONE WITH ARROWS .

WAIT ! WAIT ! I WILL PIERCE YOUR BODY WITH ARROWS !



"ASHWATTHAMA MANAGED TO DESTROY DHRISHTADYUMNA'S UMBRELLA, REAR ATTENDANTS, CHARIOTEER AND ALL THE FOUR HORSES.

ASHWATTHAMA HAS DEFEATED DHRISHTADYUMNA.



"TRUE TO HIS WORD, SATYAKI DID SLAY SOMADATTA AFTER A LONG FIGHT.



"ON RECOVERING, DRONA SENT A VAYU ASTRA* WHICH YUDHISHTHIRA REPelled BRAVELY. SEEING THIS, KRISHNA CAUTIONED .

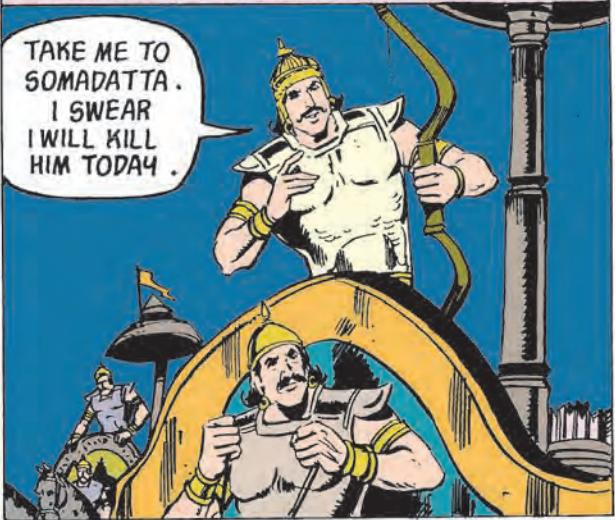
DRONA IS BENT ON CAPTURING YOU. AVOID HIM. A KING SHOULD FIGHT ONLY WITH A KING.

KRISHNA IS RIGHT. LET ME GO AND HELP BHEEMA IN HIS ATTACK.



MEANWHILE SATYAKI SAID TO HIS CHARIOTEER -

TAKE ME TO SOMADATTA. I SWEAR I WILL KILL HIM TODAY.



WHEN THE KAURAVA WARRIORs CONVERGED ON SATYAKI, YUDHISHTHIRA RUSHED TO HIS HELP AND LAUNCHED A FURIOUS ATTACK ON DRONA. DEEPLY WOUNDED, DRONA SAT DOWN IN THE CHARIOT.



"ALL THIS WHILE, THE BATTLE WAS BEING WAGED IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT, AIDED BY GUESSWORK AND THE CALLING OUT OF NAMES.



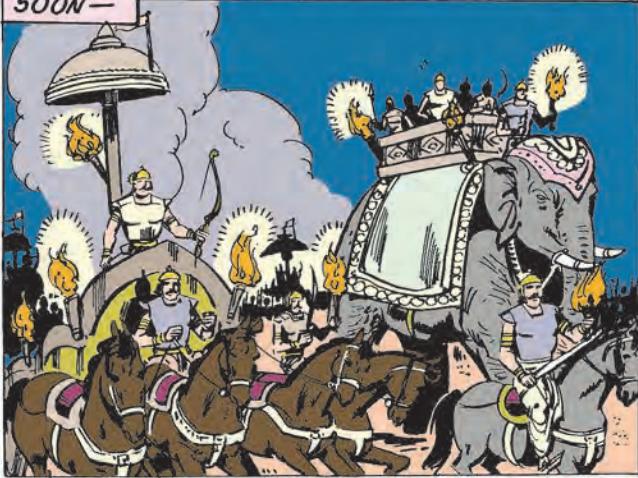
* ARROW INVOKING THE POWER OF THE WIND GOD.

THE BATTLE AT MIDNIGHT

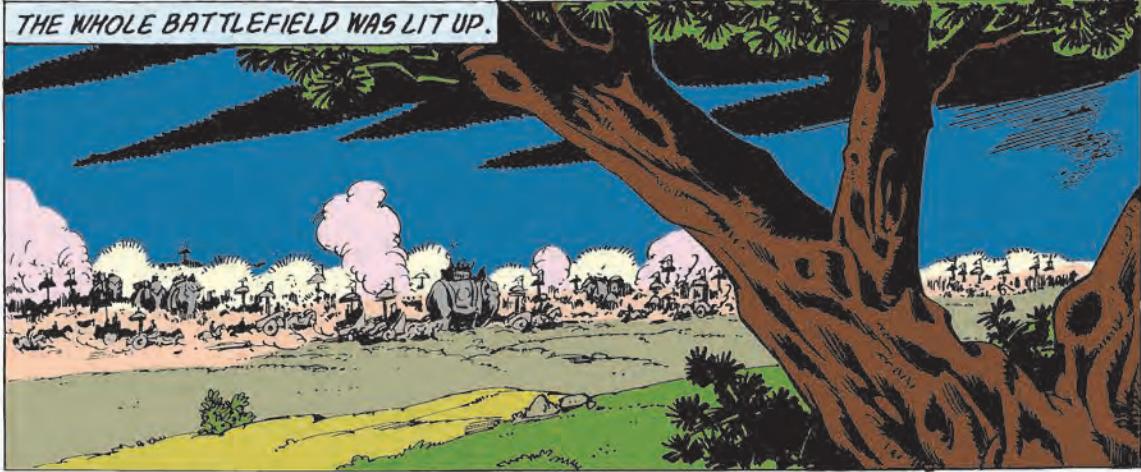
"DURYODHANA COMMANDED THE SOLDIERS ON FOOT .



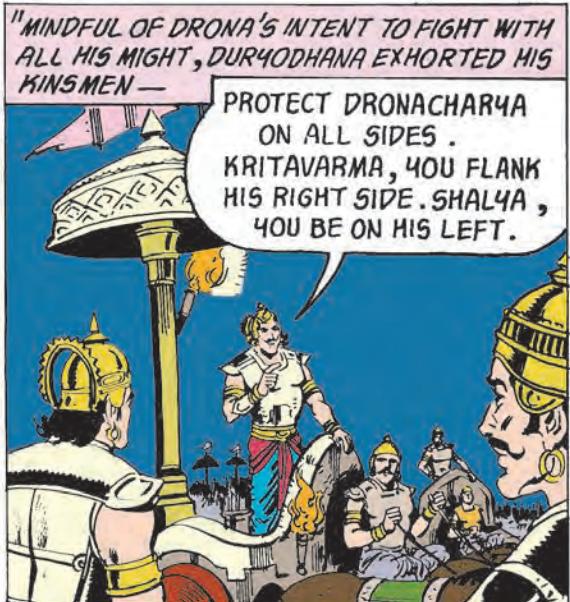
" THE PANDAVA SOLDIERS DID LIKEWISE AND SOON —



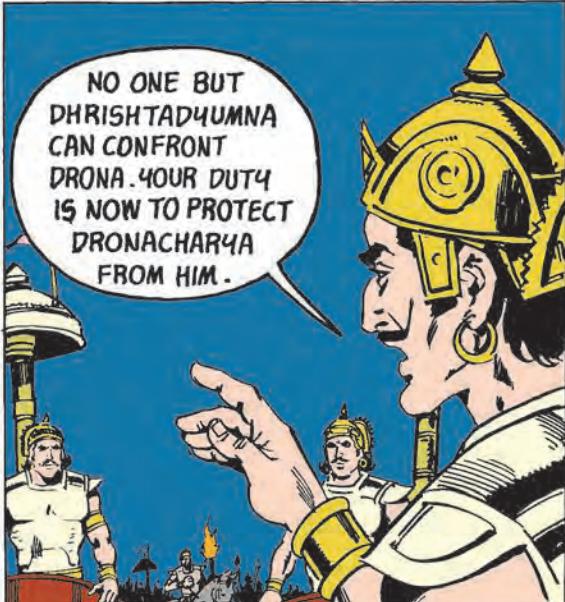
THE WHOLE BATTLEFIELD WAS LIT UP.



"MINDFUL OF DRONA'S INTENT TO FIGHT WITH ALL HIS MIGHT, DURYODHANA EXHORTED HIS KINSMEN —

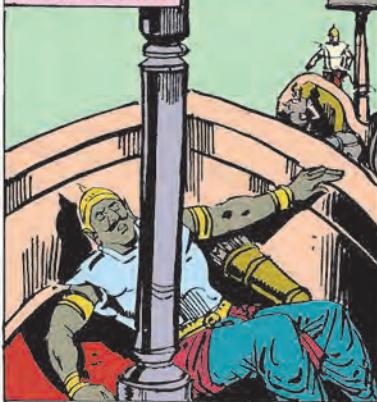


NO ONE BUT DHRISHTADYUMNA CAN CONFRONT DRONA. YOUR DUTY IS NOW TO PROTECT DRONACHARYA FROM HIM.



"IN THE BATTLE THAT ENSUED , SEVERAL DUELS WERE FOUGHT .

ASHWATTHAMA ABLY
AVERTED GHATOTKACHA'S
ADVANCES .



BHEEMA DEFEATED
DURYODHANA .



KARNA AND SAHADEVA
MET IN A DUEL .



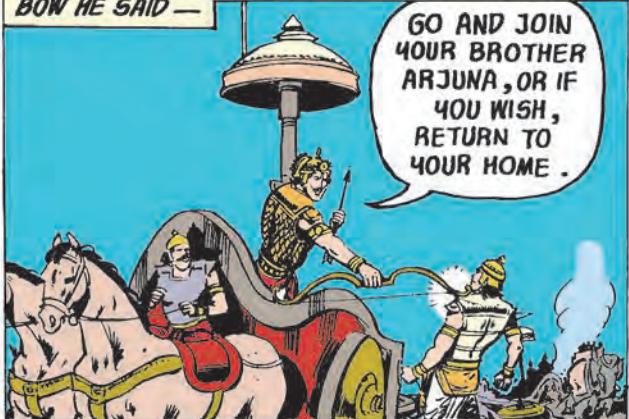
"SAHADEVA JUMPED DOWN FROM HIS
CHARIOT AND PICKED UP THE WHEEL
OF THE CHARIOT TO FLING AT KARNA .

DEAR CHILD ! DO NOT TRY
THE IMPOSSIBLE ! WHY
TRY TO FIGHT YOUR
SUPERIORS ?



KARNA SHATTERED THE WHEEL WITH HIS
ARROWS BUT SPARED SAHADEVA'S LIFE .
LIGHTLY TOUCHING HIM WITH THE TIP OF HIS
BOW HE SAID —

GO AND JOIN
YOUR BROTHER
ARJUNA , OR IF
YOU WISH ,
RETURN TO
YOUR HOME .



"MEANWHILE , VIRATA WAS DEFEATED
BY SHALYA AND SHIKHANDI WAS
VANQUISHED BY KRIPA . HOWEVER ,
NAKULA SCORED A VICTORY OVER SHAKUNI .



"THE BATTLE THAT RAGED BETWEEN KARNA AND
SATYAKI WAS A TERRIBLE ONE .



THE BATTLE AT MIDNIGHT

"KARNA'S FURY WAS CREATING HAVOC AMONG THE PANDAVA FORCES. ARJUNA SAID—



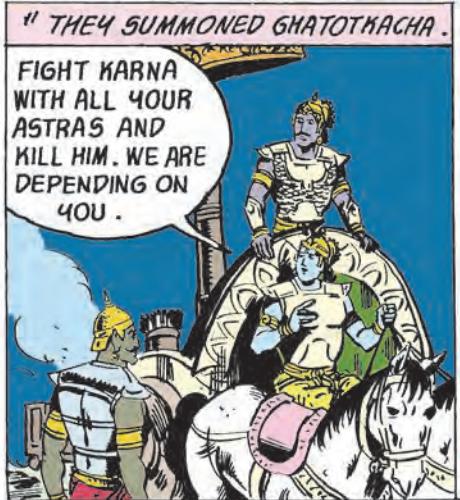
"AWARE OF THE MIGHTY SHAKTI IN KARNA'S POSSESSION, KRISHNA DEMURRED—

BESIDES YOU, GHATOTKACHA ALONE IS CAPABLE OF FACING KARNA. LET HIM DO SO, WHILE YOU PROTECT YUDHISHTHIRA.



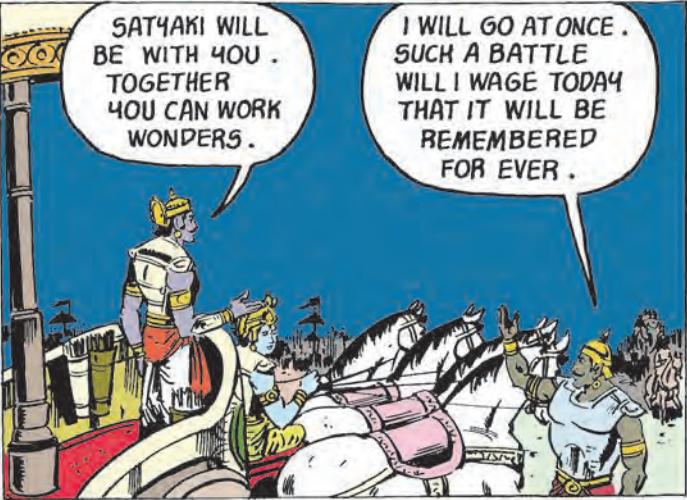
"THEY SUMMONED GHATOTKACHA.

FIGHT KARNA WITH ALL YOUR ASTRAS AND KILL HIM. WE ARE DEPENDING ON YOU.

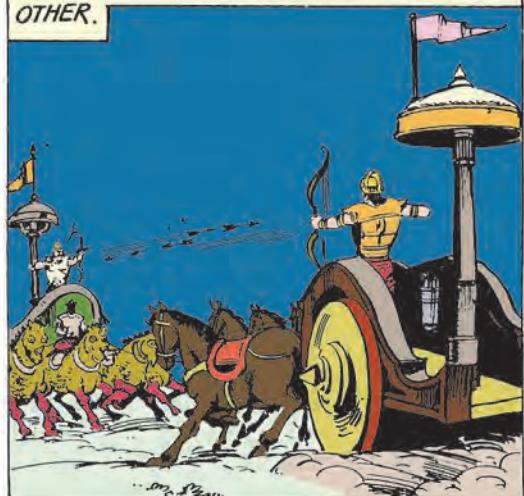


SATYAKI WILL BE WITH YOU. TOGETHER YOU CAN WORK WONDERS.

I WILL GO AT ONCE. SUCH A BATTLE WILL I WAGE TODAY THAT IT WILL BE REMEMBERED FOR EVER.

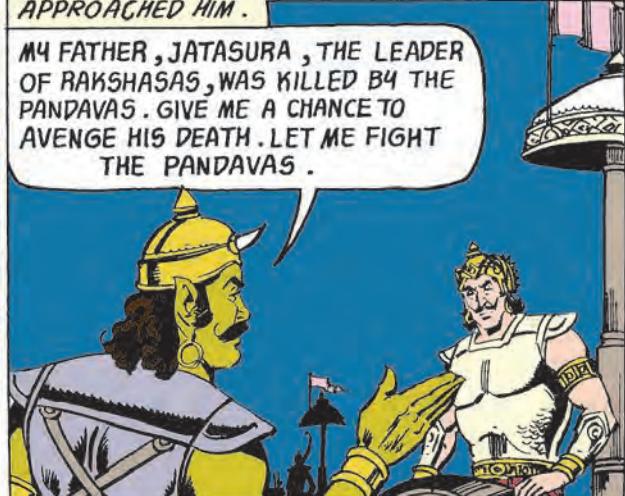


"IN THE MIDST OF THAT DREADFUL NIGHT, KARNA AND GHATOTKACHA FACED EACH OTHER.



"JUST AS DURYODHANA WAS ABOUT TO SEND DUHSHASANA TO KARNA'S AID, ALAMBUSA APPROACHED HIM.

MY FATHER, JATASURA, THE LEADER OF RAKSHASAS, WAS KILLED BY THE PANDAVAS. GIVE ME A CHANCE TO AVENGE HIS DEATH. LET ME FIGHT THE PANDAVAS.



"DURYODHANA WAS GLAD TO OBLIGE .

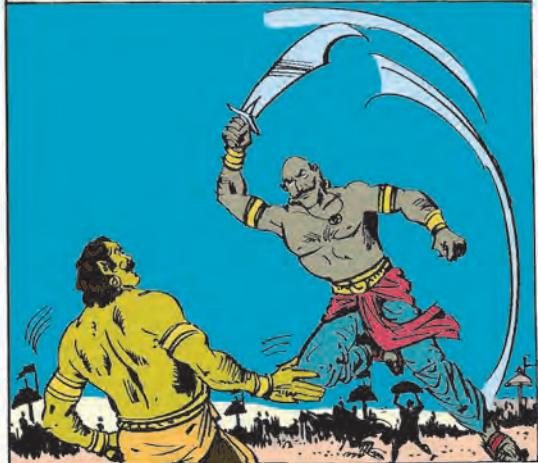
YOU ARE
WELCOME. GO AND
FIGHT
GHATOTKACHA .



" THE TWO RAKSHASAS FOUGHT WITH VARIOUS WEAPONS AND FINALLY WITH BARE HANDS .



SUDDENLY , GHATOTKACHA JUMPED UP
AND SWOOPED DOWN WITH A SWORD .

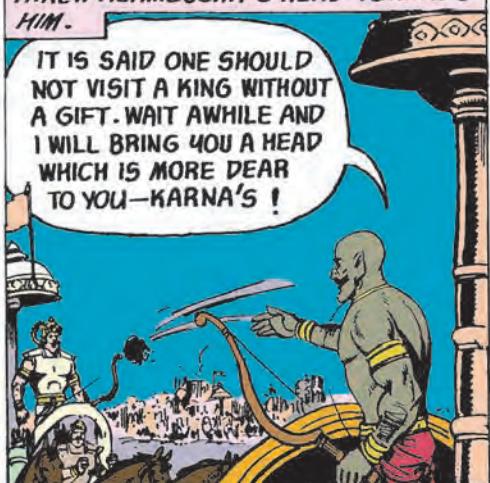


" WITH A DREADFUL CRY , GHATOTKACHA CUT
OFF HIS OPPONENT'S HEAD .



" APPROACHING DURYODHANA , HE
THREW ALAMBUSA'S HEAD TOWARDS
HIM .

IT IS SAID ONE SHOULD
NOT VISIT A KING WITHOUT
A GIFT. WAIT AWHILE AND
I WILL BRING YOU A HEAD
WHICH IS MORE DEAR
TO YOU—KARNA'S !

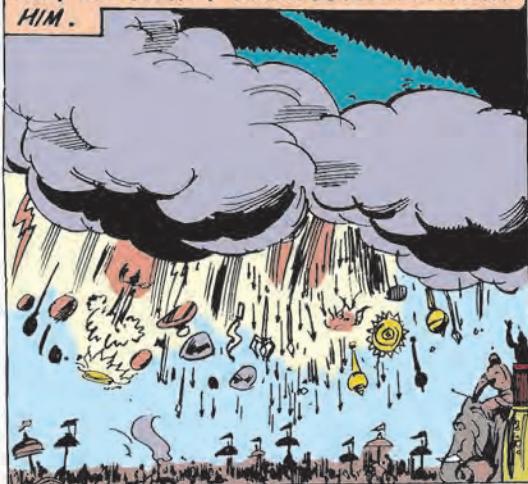


SO FIERCE WAS THE BATTLE BETWEEN KARNA AND
GHATOTKACHA THAT IT MADE MIGHTY WARRIOR TREMBLE .
GHATOTKACHA WAS IN THE SKY IN A MINUTE ...



THE BATTLE AT MIDNIGHT

"...AND ON THE GROUND THE NEXT . HE APPEARED TO BE EVERYWHERE AT ONCE . ONLY THE MIGHTY KARNA COULD CONFRONT HIM .



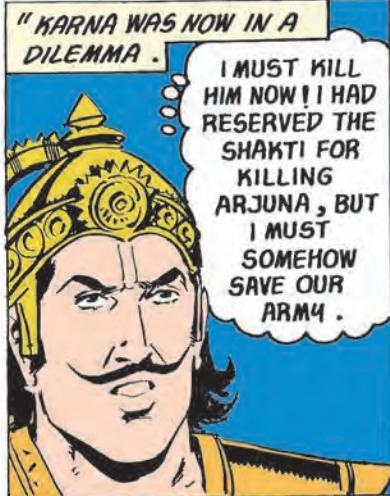
"ALTHOUGH KARNA ABLY CONFRONTED HIM , GHATOTKACHA'S ONSLAUGHT TERRIFIED THE KAURAVAS .

USE YOUR SHAKTI !
PROTECT US , O KARNA !
KILL GHATOTKACHA .

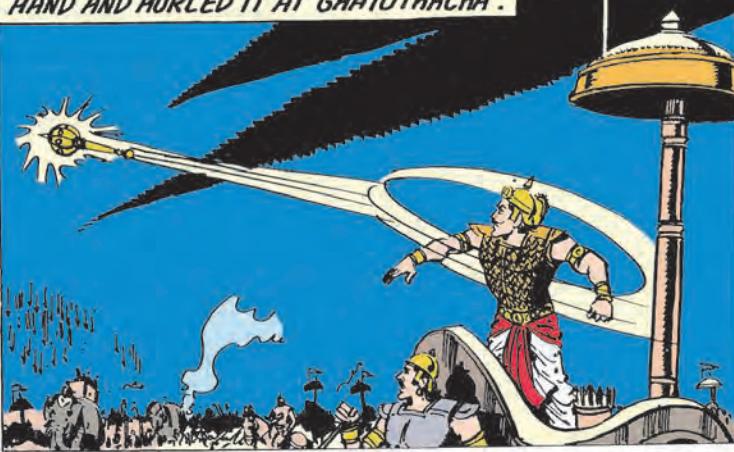


"KARNA WAS NOW IN A DILEMMA .

I MUST KILL HIM NOW ! I HAD RESERVED THE SHAKTI FOR KILLING ARJUNA , BUT I MUST SOMEHOW SAVE OUR ARMY .



"RELUCTANTLY KARNA TOOK UP THE SHAKTI IN HIS RIGHT HAND AND HURLED IT AT GHATOTKACHA .



LIKE A SHAFT OF LIGHTNING , IT SPED TOWARDS GHATOTKACHA .



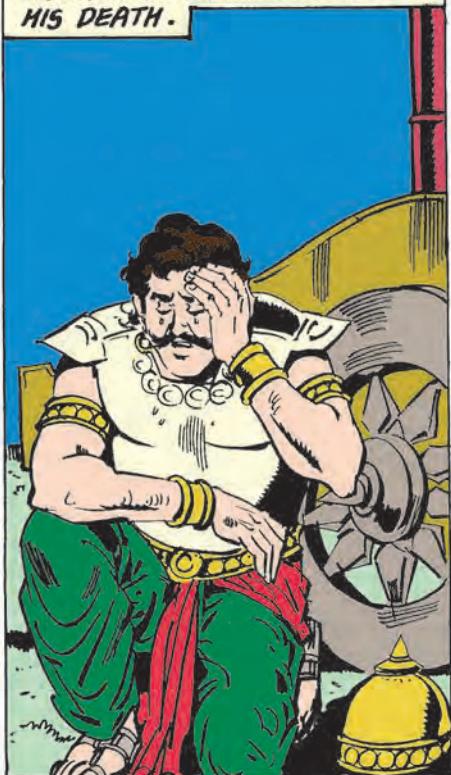
"GHATOTKACHA KNEW HIS END WAS NEAR . AS A LAST DEVICE , HE EXPANDED HIS BODY WITH MAGICAL POWERS ...



... SO THAT WHEN THE SHAKTI PIERCED AND FELLED HIM, A VAST NUMBER OF KAURAVA SOLDIERS WERE CRUSHED UNDER HIS WEIGHT.



"BHEEMA AND OTHER PANDAVAS WERE SHOCKED AT HIS DEATH."

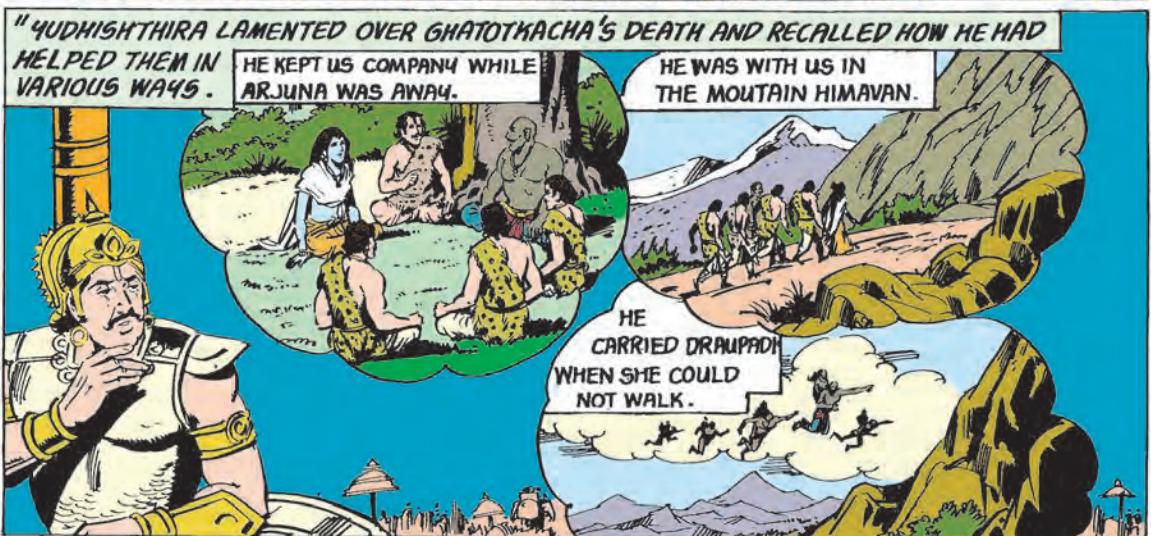
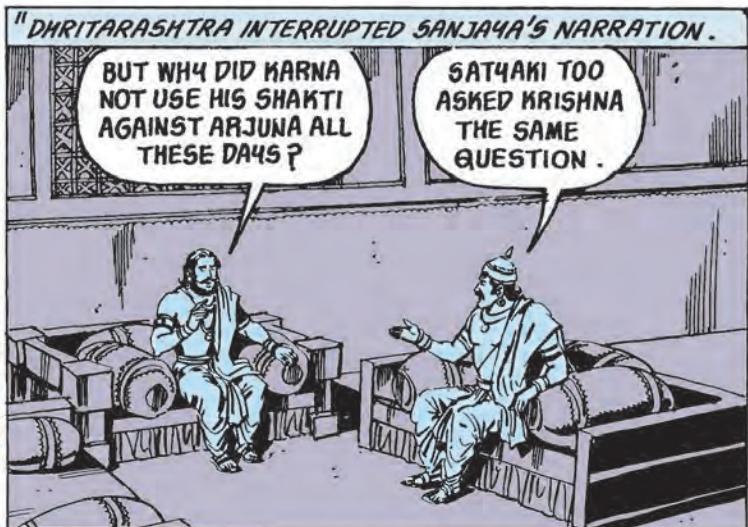
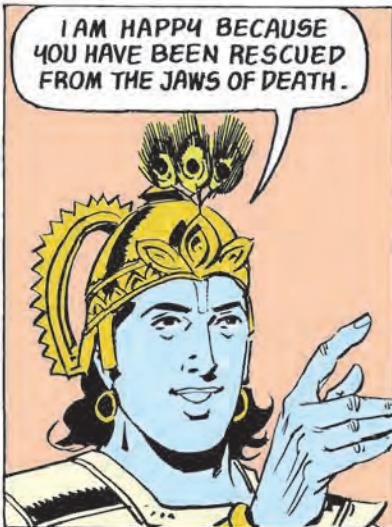


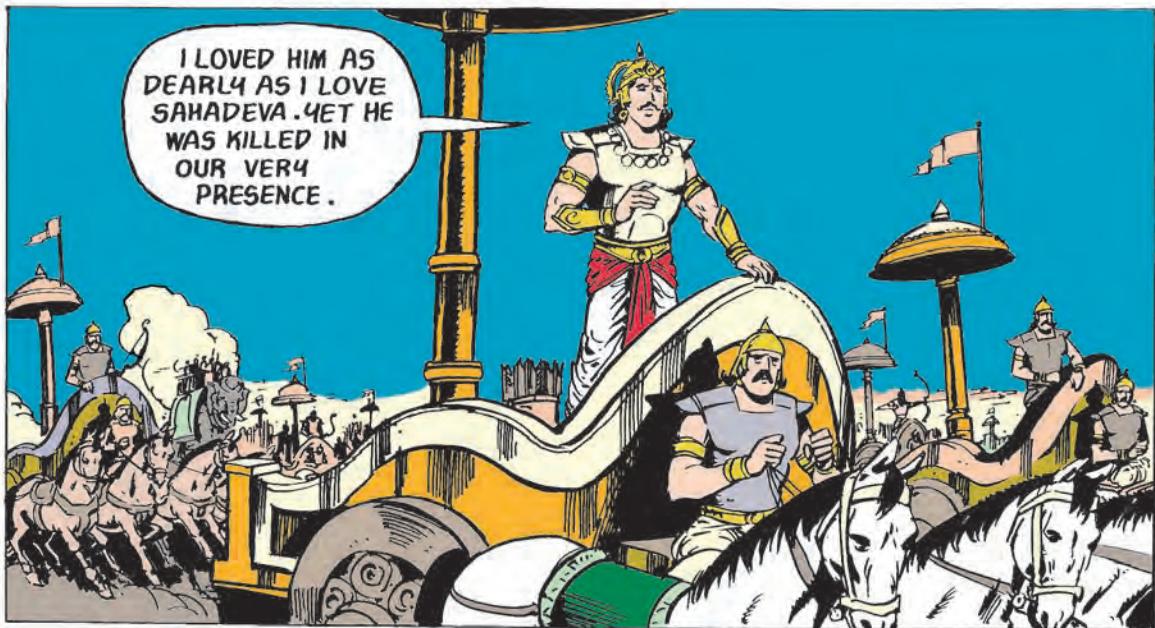
KRISHNA CONSOLED THEM AND SAID TO ARJUNA.

KARNA HAS USED HIS SHAKTI ONCE AND IT HAS RETURNED TO INDRA.
OH! HOW I HAD WORRIED ABOUT HIS USING IT AGAINST YOU. NOW BEREFT OF THE SHAKTI, KARNA IS LIKE A FANGLESS SERPENT.



THE BATTLE AT MIDNIGHT





YUDHISHTHIRA WAS ABOUT TO ATTACK KARNA WHEN VYASA APPEARED AND CONSOLED HIM, SAYING THAT GHATOTKACHA'S DEATH HAD BEEN ORDAINED. HE ALSO ASSURED HIM OF VICTORY IN FIVE DAYS.



"IT WAS WELL PAST MIDNIGHT. THE SOLDIERS OF BOTH ARMIES WERE WEARY. RAISING HIS VOICE, ARJUNA ANNOUNCED—

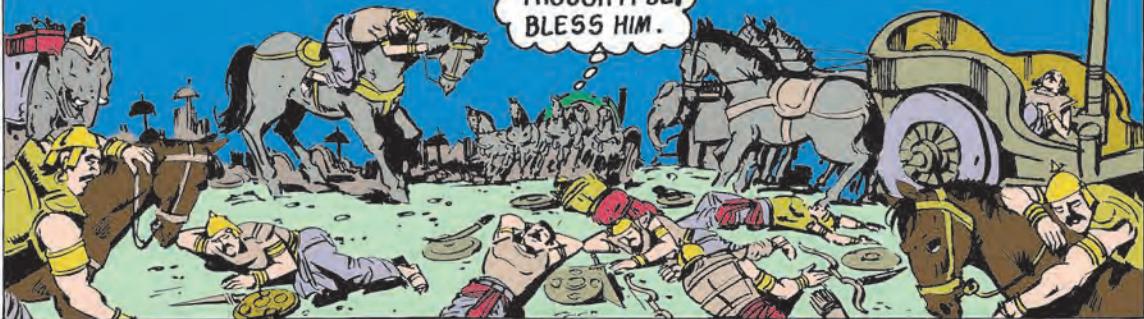
EVERYONE IS TIRED AND EXHAUSTED. THE DARKNESS IS DENSE. IF YOU, KAURAVAS, AGREE, I SUGGEST WE ALL REST IN THE BATTLEFIELD AWHILE.

WE AGREE !
WE WILL RESUME FIGHTING LATER .



"AS ARJUNA'S SUGGESTION WAS UNANIMOUSLY ACCEPTED,
THE SOLDIERS GRATEFULLY LAY DOWN TO SLEEP."

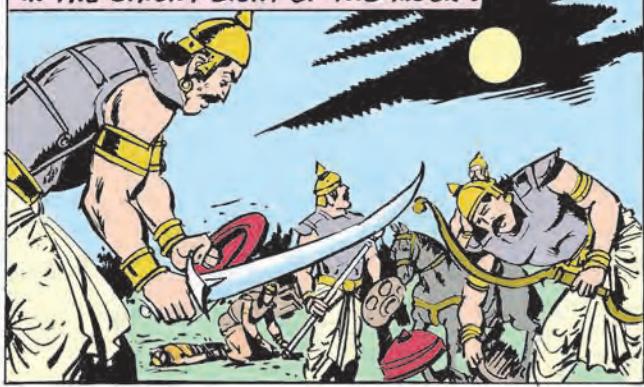
ONLY ARJUNA
COULD BE SO
THOUGHTFUL!
BLESS HIM.



"THE BATTLEFIELD WHICH HAD RESOUNDED WITH WAR CRIES WAS NOW ENVELOPED IN SILENCE. THE HUGE ARMIES LAY STILL LIKE A PAINTING DRAWN BY A GIFTED ARTIST..."

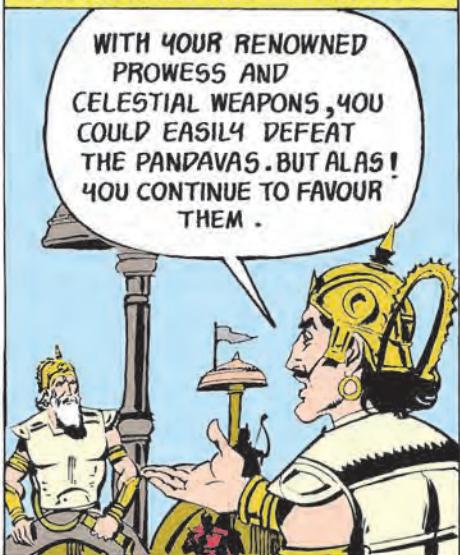


"...TILL THE MOON CAME UP. ONE BY ONE THE MEN BEGAN TO STIR. THE BATTLE WAS RESUMED IN THE BRIGHT LIGHT OF THE MOON."



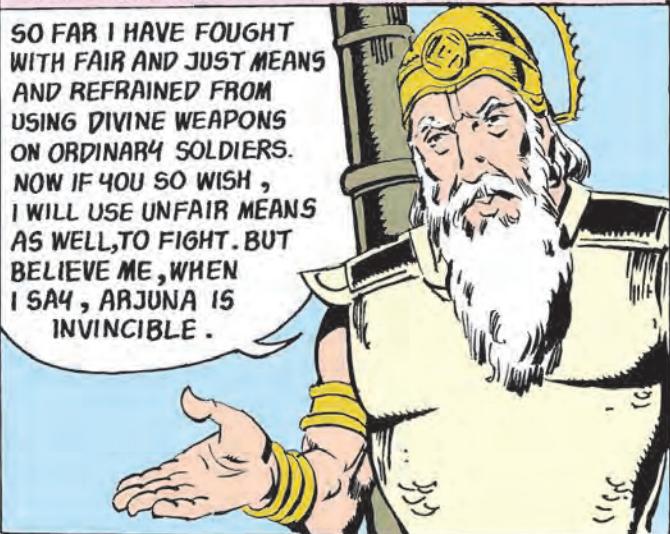
DURYODHANA SAID TO DRONA -

WITH YOUR RENOWNED PROWESS AND CELESTIAL WEAPONS, YOU COULD EASILY DEFEAT THE PANDAVAS. BUT ALAS! YOU CONTINUE TO FAVOUR THEM.

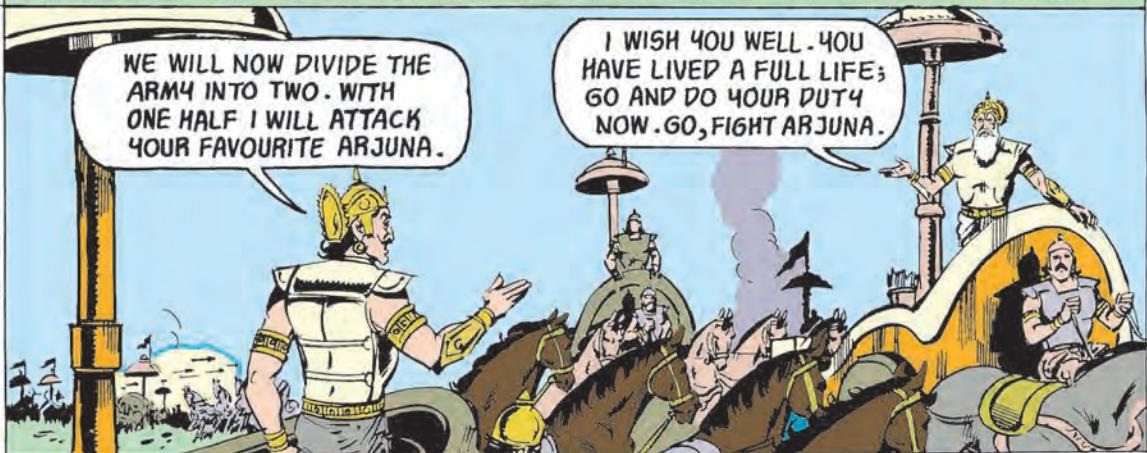


"THE OFT-REPEATED SARCASM AND ACCUSATION WERE BEGINNING TO IRRITATE DRONA."

SO FAR I HAVE FOUGHT WITH FAIR AND JUST MEANS AND REFRAINED FROM USING DIVINE WEAPONS ON ORDINARY SOLDIERS. NOW IF YOU SO WISH, I WILL USE UNFAIR MEANS AS WELL, TO FIGHT. BUT BELIEVE ME, WHEN I SAY, ARJUNA IS INVINCIBLE.



"DURYODHANA WAS TOUCHED TO THE QUICK BY THIS PRAISE OF HIS ARCH ENEMY. HE SAID -



"ONE HALF OF THE ARMY WITH DURYODHANA, DUHSHASANA, SHAKUNI AND KARNA, SET OUT TO CONFRONT ARJUNA. BUT THEY WERE ROUTED IN NO TIME .



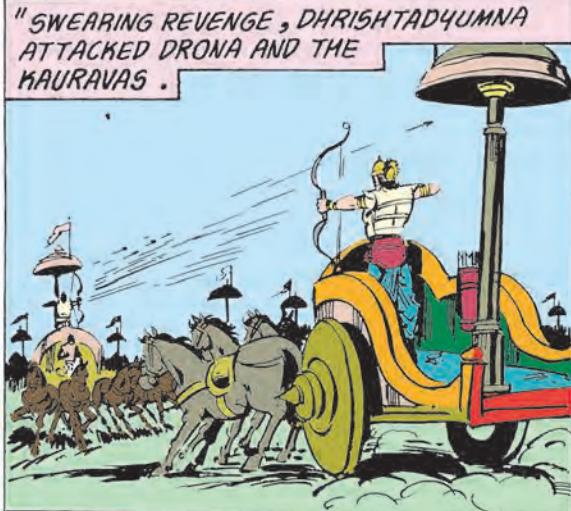
"DRONA LED THE REST OF THE ARMY AND KILLED THREE GRANDSONS OF DRUPADA .



"WITH TWO SHARP JAVELINS, HE KILLED VIRATA AND DRUPADA. DHRISHTADYUMNA WAS STUNNED WITH GRIEF.



"SWARING REVENGE, DHRISHTADYUMNA ATTACKED DRONA AND THE KAURAVAS .

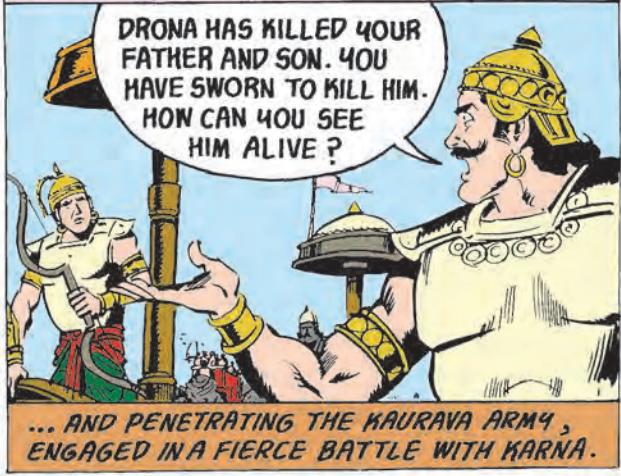


THE BATTLE AT MIDNIGHT

"DURYODHANIA CAME TO HELP DRONA WITH THE REST OF THE ARMY .



"TRY AS HE MIGHT , DHRISHTADYUMNA COULD NOT REACH DRONA . BHEEMA TAUNTED HIM ...



"MEANWHILE THE SUN ROSE IN THE EAST.* THE WARRIOR NOW FOUGHT WITH RENEWED VIGOUR . KARNA WAS ENGAGED IN A COMBAT BY BHEEMA .



"BUT THE SPECTACULAR SIGHT WAS THE CONFRONTATION BETWEEN DRONA AND ARJUNA .



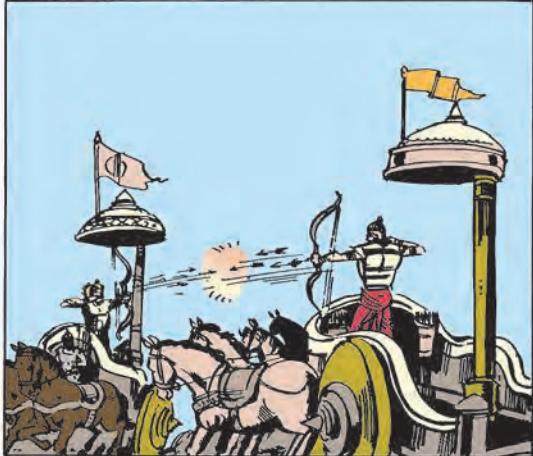
"AFTER A PROLONGED FIGHT WITH EARTHLY AND CELESTIAL WEAPONS, DRONA SENT THE BRAHMASTRA TOWARDS ARJUNA WHO COUNTERED IT WITH THE SAME ASTRA .



NOW DRONA TURNED AWAY FROM ARJUNA AND FOUGHT THE PANCHALA ARMY .



"DURYODHANA AND SATYAKI WERE ENGAGED IN A STRANGE ENCOUNTER.



"WHILE THEY RAINED ARROWS AT EACH OTHER, THEY RECALLED WITH NOSTALGIA THEIR EARLIER DAYS.

WHAT HAPPY TIMES WE HAD TOGETHER, DEAR SATYAKI. NOW BECAUSE OF MY GREED, WE MEET AS ENEMIES.

MY DEAR DURYODHANA, THIS IS NEITHER OUR GURU'S HOUSE NOR AN ASSEMBLY. LET US FIGHT LIKE TRUE KSHATRIVAS.

"MEANWHILE DRONA WAS FIGHTING AS IF POSSESSED BY A DEMON. THE PANDAVAS WATCHED AGHAST.

THIS IS NOT LIKE THE ACHARYA AT ALL.

HE DOES NOT LOOK HUMAN.



"THE PANIC AMONG THE SOLDIERS SET KRISHNA THINKING.

DRONA IS USING UNFAIR MEANS. HE IS EVEN USING DIVINE WEAPONS AGAINST ORDINARY SOLDIERS.



"HE SAID TO YUDHISHTHIRA -

IF DRONA KEEPS FIGHTING THUS, YOU WILL HAVE NO ARMY LEFT. WE WILL HAVE TO MAKE HIM LAY DOWN HIS WEAPONS.

YES, BUT HOW?



KRISHNA THOUGHTFULLY SAID -

I AM SURE IF HE HEARS THAT HIS SON ASHWATTHAMA IS NO MORE, HE WILL STOP FIGHTING.



"ARJUNA DID NOT APPROVE OF THIS SUGGESTION. YUDHISHTHIRA AGREED AFTER MUCH PERSUASION. MEANWHILE, BHEEMA KILLED AN ELEPHANT CALLED ASHWATTHAMA. GOING NEAR DRONA HE ANNOUNCED—



DRONA ALMOST FAINTED WITH SHOCK.



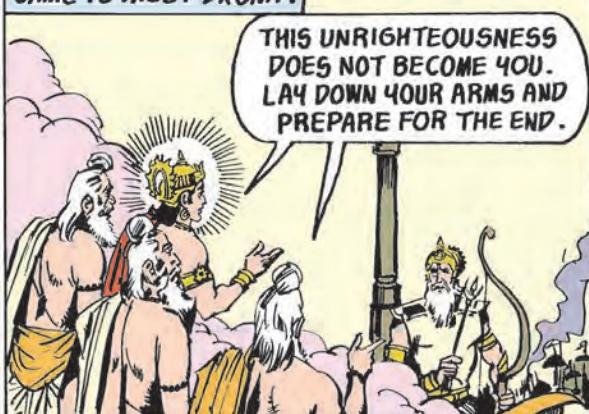
BUT SOON RECOVERED.



"DRONA RESUMED FIGHTING WITH ALL WEAPONS AT HIS DISPOSAL, SLAUGHTERING THE PANDAVA FORCES .



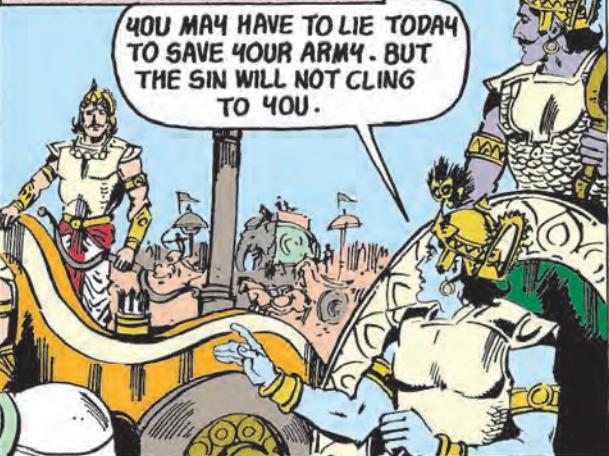
"SEEING HIS UNFAIR AND INHUMAN APPROACH , THE RISHIS FROM HEAVEN , LED BY AGNI , CAME TO MEET DRONA .



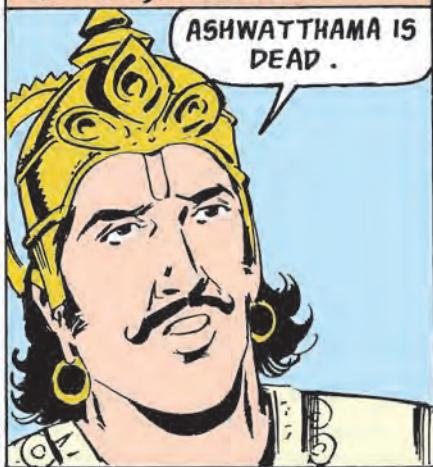
"DEEPLY MOVED BY THEIR COUNSEL AND BHEEMA'S EARLIER ANNOUNCEMENT, DRONA LOOKED AT YUDHISHTHIRA AND SAID —



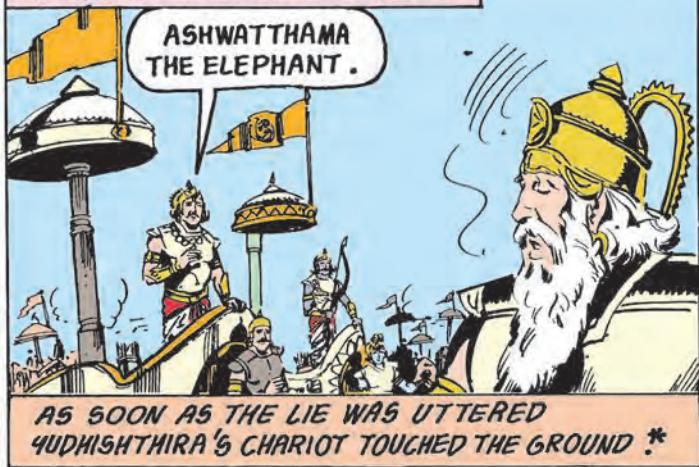
YUDHISHTHIRA HAD NEVER SPOKEN AN UNTRUTH IN HIS LIFE. BUT KRISHNA HAD ANTICIPATED THIS SITUATION AND TOLD HIM .



"SO NOW, HE REPLIED —



ADDING IN AN INAUDIBLE ASIDE—

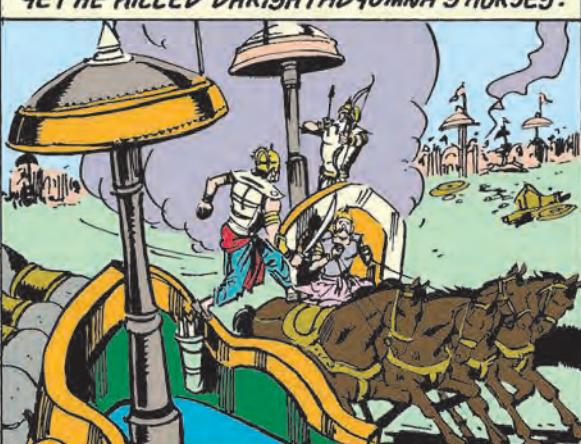


AS SOON AS THE LIE WAS UTTERED YUDHISHTHIRA'S CHARIOT TOUCHED THE GROUND *

"HEARING THE NEWS FROM YUDHISHTHIRA, DRONA FAINTED. DHRISHTADYUMNA RUSHED TOWARDS HIM.



"WHEN DRONA GAINED CONSCIOUSNESS, HE COULD NOT GAIN HIS EARLIER STRENGTH. YET HE KILLED DHRISHTADYUMNA'S HORSES.

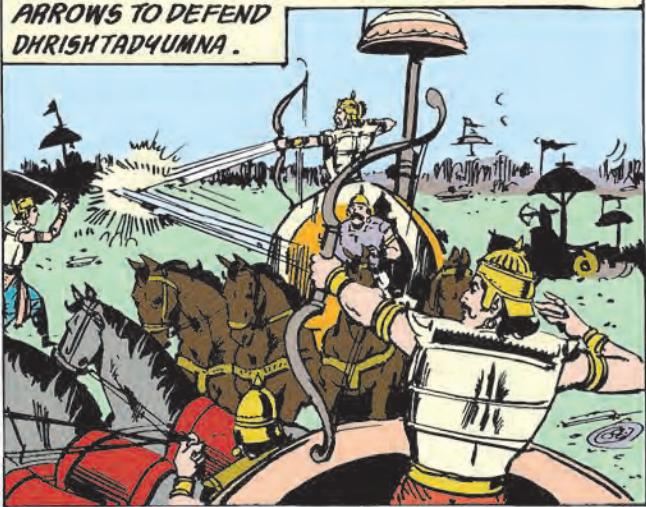


* BECAUSE OF HIS RIGHTEOUS CONDUCT YUDHISHTHIRA'S CHARIOT WAS ALWAYS FOUR FINGER'S BREADTH ABOVE THE GROUND.

"NOW DRONA SHOT SPECIAL SHORT-RANGE ARROWS, AT DHRISHTADYUMNA.



"SATYAKI INTERVENED IN TIME WITH A VOLLEY OF ARROWS TO DEFEND DHRISHTADYUMNA.



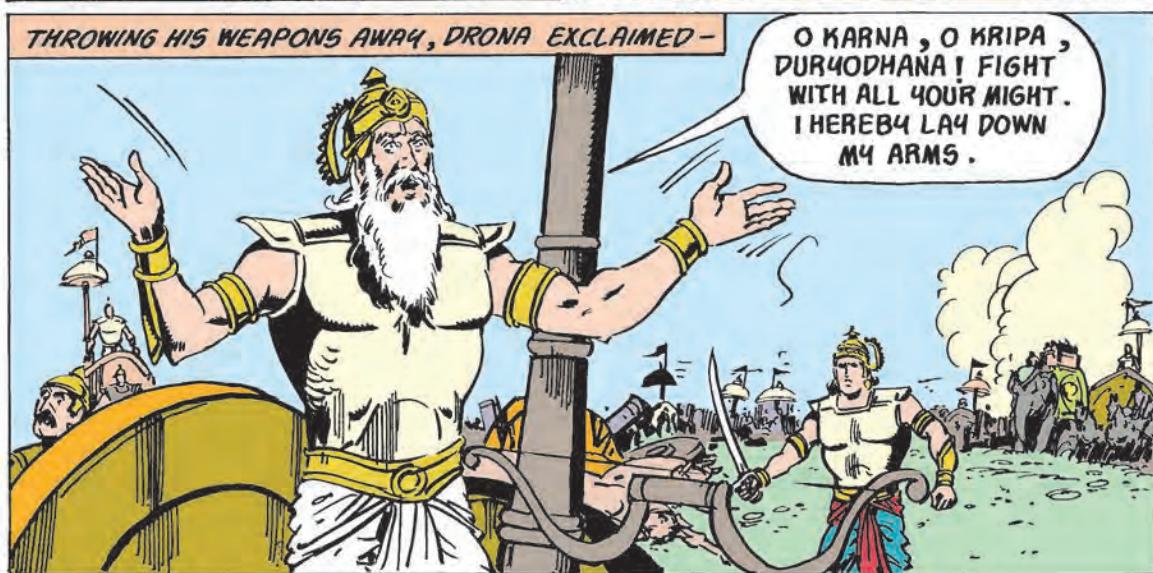
BHEEMA CONFRONTED DRONA AND SAID SARCASTICALLY -

YOU TEACH DHARMA TO OTHERS
YET YOU ABANDON YOUR OWN
DUTY AS A BRAHMANA, EVEN
WITH YOUR SON DEAD, YOU
CONTINUE TO FIGHT.

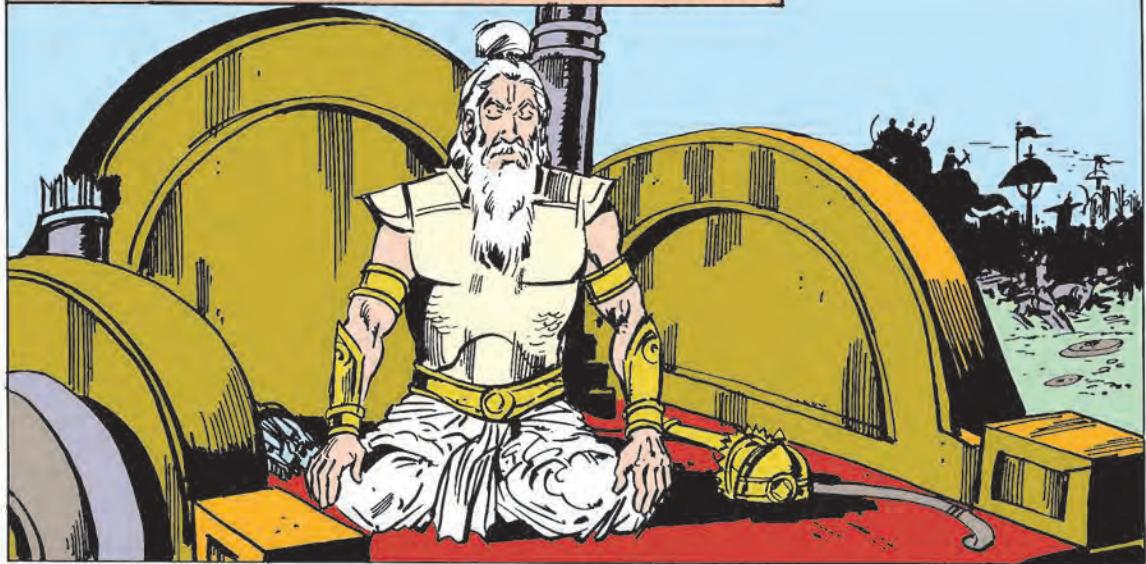


THROWING HIS WEAPONS AWAY, DRONA EXCLAIMED -

O KARNA, O KRIPA,
DURYODHANA ! FIGHT
WITH ALL YOUR MIGHT.
I HEREBY LAY DOWN
MY ARMS.

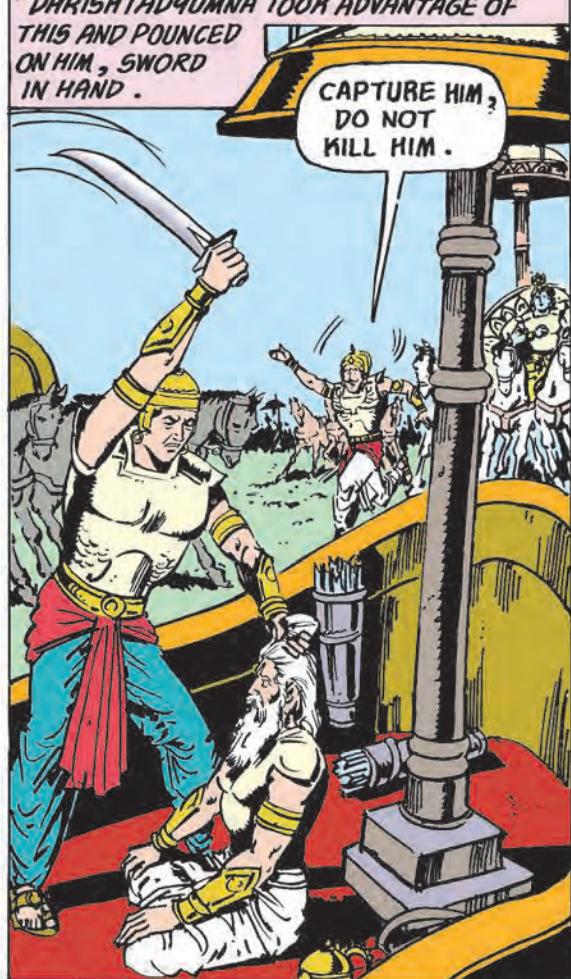


"HE SAT DOWN IN HIS CHARIOT IN A POSE OF MEDITATION."

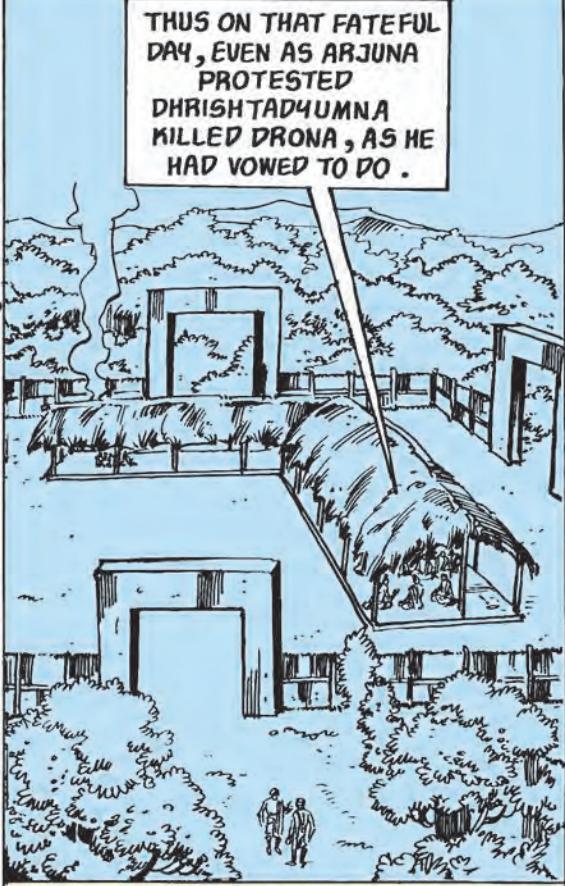


"DHRISHTADYUMNA TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THIS AND POUNCED ON HIM, SWORD IN HAND .

CAPTURE HIM,
DO NOT
KILL HIM.



THUS ON THAT FATEFUL DAY, EVEN AS ARJUNA PROTESTED DHRISHTADYUMNA KILLED DRONA, AS HE HAD VOWED TO DO .

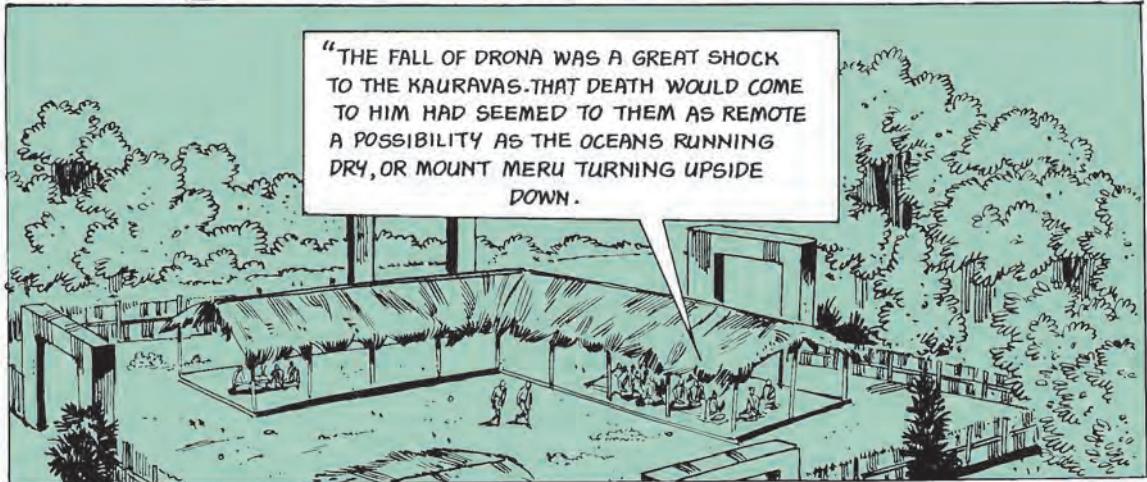


THUS ENDS THE THIRTY-SIXTH SESSION OF OUR RENDERING OF VYASA'S IMMORTAL ITIHASA - THE MAHABHARATA .

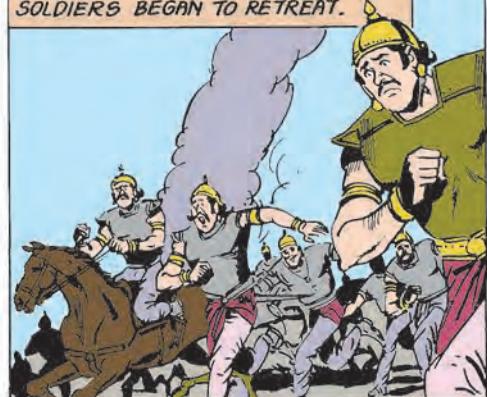
Mahabharata - 37

KARNA IN COMMAND

"THE FALL OF DRONA WAS A GREAT SHOCK TO THE KAURAVAS. THAT DEATH WOULD COME TO HIM HAD SEEMED TO THEM AS REMOTE A POSSIBILITY AS THE OCEANS RUNNING DRY, OR MOUNT MERU TURNING UPSIDE DOWN.



"IN FEAR AND PANIC, THE KAURAVA SOLDIERS BEGAN TO RETREAT."



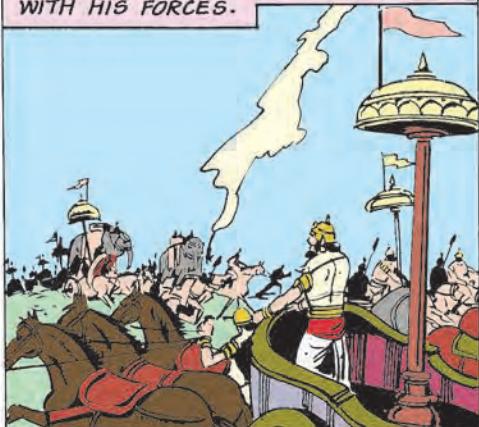
"EVEN WARRIOR LIKE KARNA, SHALYA AND Kripacharya fled from the battlefield."



"WHILE SOME SOLDIERS DISCARDED THEIR ARMOUR AS THEY RAN, OTHERS JUMPED ONTO THEIR HORSES TO GET AWAY FASTER."



"IN THE MIDST OF THE PANIC AND THE CONFUSION ASHWATTHAMA ADVANCED WITH HIS FORCES."



"SURPRISED TO SEE THE ARMY ON THE RUN, HE ASKED DURYODHANA —

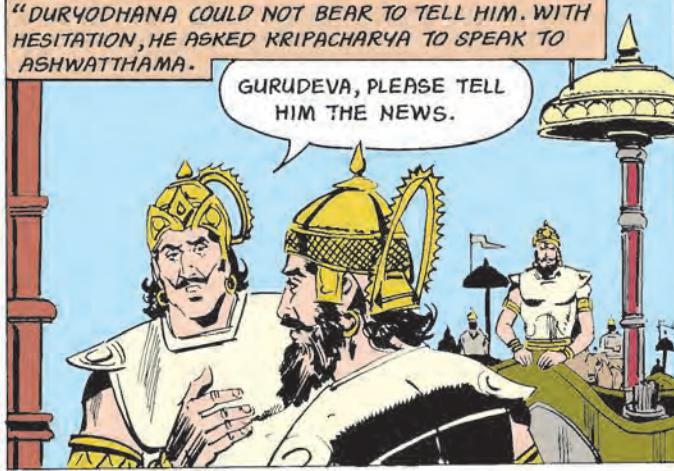


O KING! HAS ANY LION-HEARTED WARRIOR FALLEN? IS THAT WHY THEY ARE FILLED WITH FEAR? TELL ME.



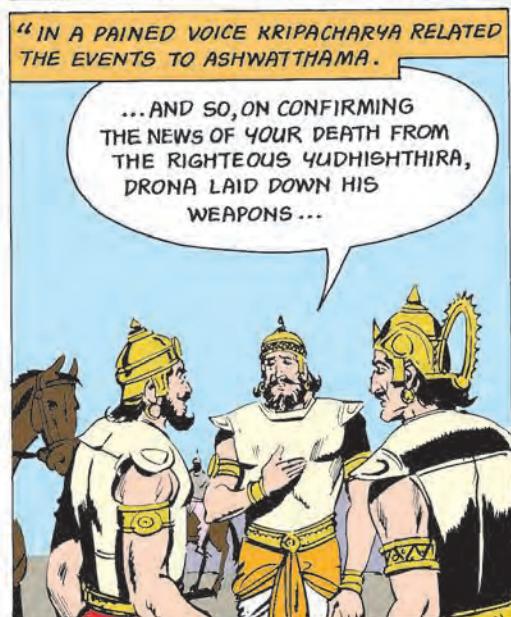
"DURYODHANA COULD NOT BEAR TO TELL HIM. WITH HESITATION, HE ASKED KRIPACHARYA TO SPEAK TO ASHWATTHAMA."

GURUDEVA, PLEASE TELL HIM THE NEWS.



"IN A PAINED VOICE KRIPACHARYA RELATED THE EVENTS TO ASHWATTHAMA.

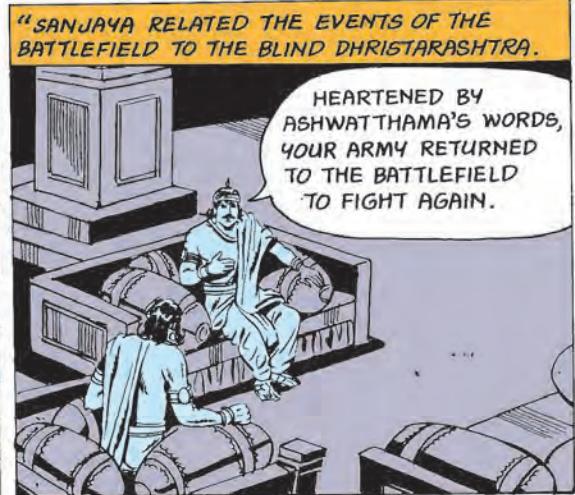
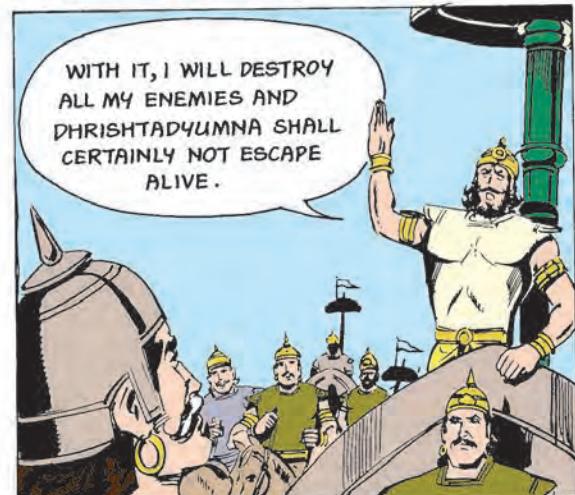
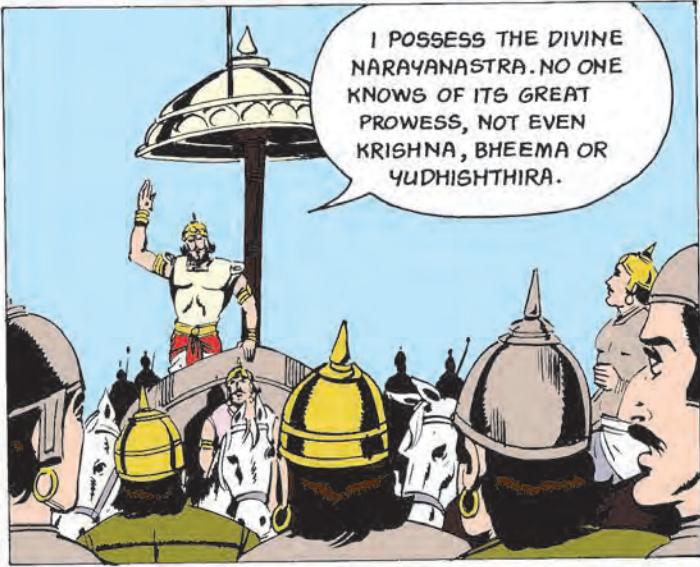
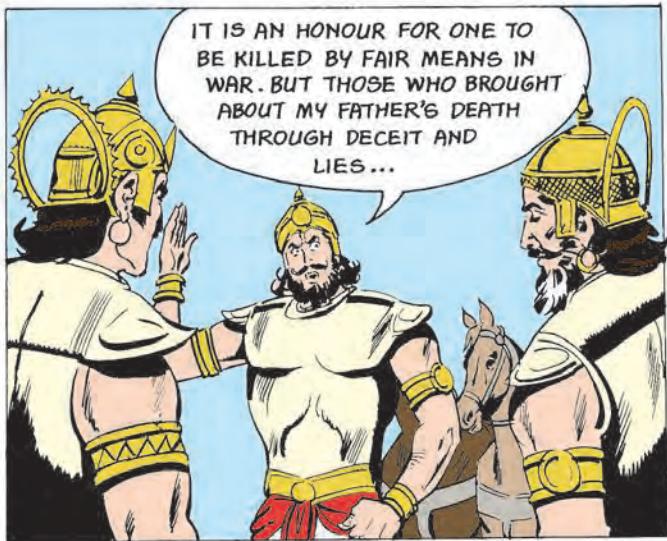
... AND SO, ON CONFIRMING THE NEWS OF YOUR DEATH FROM THE RIGHTEOUS YUDHISHTHIRA, DRONA LAID DOWN HIS WEAPONS ...



... AND DHRISHTADYUMNA SEIZED THE CHANCE TO KILL HIM.



KARNA IN COMMAND



"THE TUMULT OF CONCH SHELLS AND TRUMPETS HERALDING THE APPROACH OF THE KAURAVAS, INFUSED WITH ENTHUSIASM AGAIN, TOOK THE PANDAVAS BY SURPRISE.

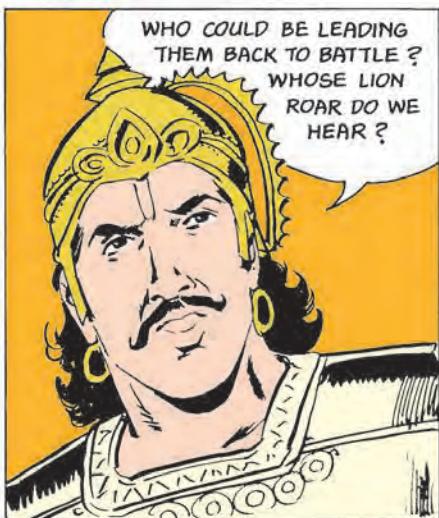


"YUDHISHTHIRA ASKED ARJUNA —

DISHEARTENED BY DRONA'S DEATH, THE KAURAVAS HAD FLED. BUT NOW THEY APPEAR TO BE RETURNING TO FIGHT.

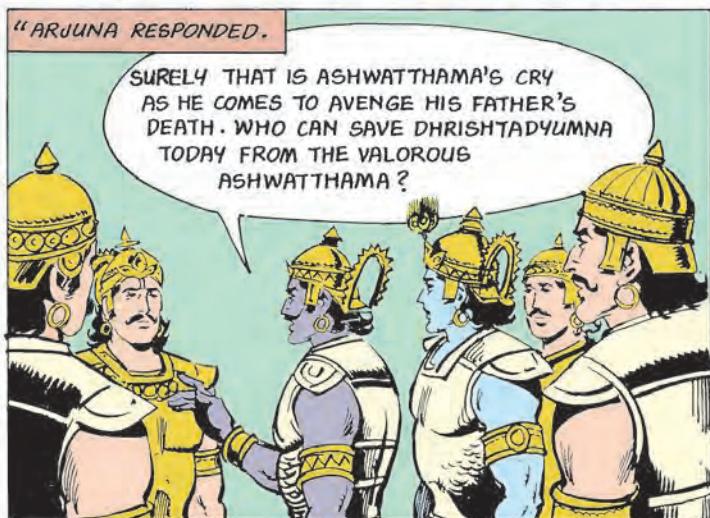


WHO COULD BE LEADING THEM BACK TO BATTLE ?
WHOSE LION ROAR DO WE HEAR ?



"ARJUNA RESPONDED.

SURELY THAT IS ASHWATTHAMA'S CRY AS HE COMES TO AVENGE HIS FATHER'S DEATH. WHO CAN SAVE DHRISHTADYUMNA TODAY FROM THE VALOROUS ASHWATTHAMA ?



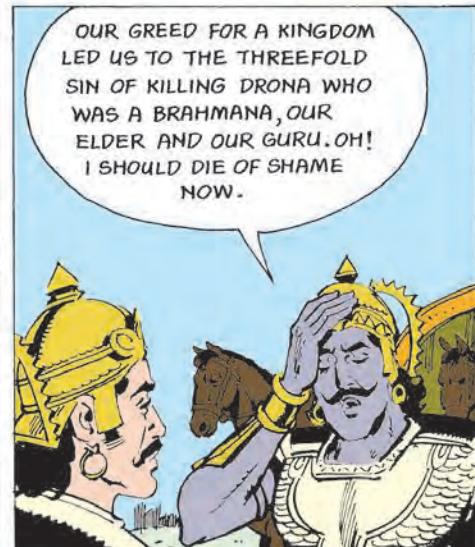
YOU TOO ARE GUILTY, O KING, FOR HAVING DECEIVED DRONA WITH YOUR ONE LIE.



OH ! WE MUST BE ALL GETTING OLD AND SENILE TO HAVE BEHAVED AS WE DID.



OUR GREED FOR A KINGDOM LED US TO THE THREEFOLD SIN OF KILLING DRONA WHO WAS A BRAHMANA, OUR ELDER AND OUR GURU. OH ! I SHOULD DIE OF SHAME NOW.



KARNA IN COMMAND

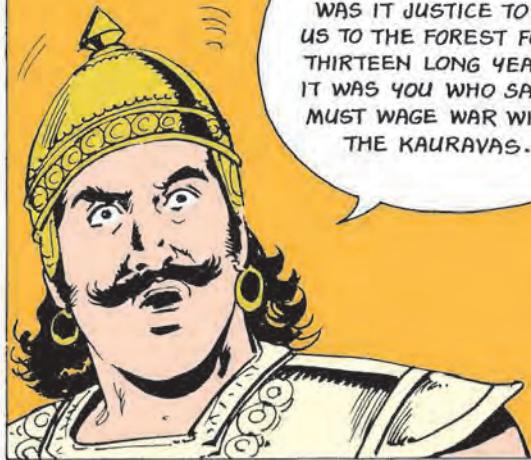
"ALL THE PANDAVAS WERE DUMBSTRUCK AT ARJUNA'S OUTBURST. THEN BHEEMA SPOKE UP.

AH! MY RIGHTEOUS BROTHER! YOU SOUND LIKE A BRAHMANA GIVING A DISCOURSE. BUT AS A TRUE-BLOODED KSHATRIYA, THESE WORDS ILL BECOME YOU.



"ANGER WAS EVIDENT IN WHAT BHEEMA SAID.

WAS NOT OUR KINGDOM SEIZED BY UNFAIR MEANS? WAS IT JUSTICE TO BANISH US TO THE FOREST FOR THIRTEEN LONG YEARS? IT WAS YOU WHO SAID WE MUST WAGE WAR WITH THE KAURAVAS.



ALL THESE YEARS, WE HELD OUR ANGER IN CHECK BECAUSE YUDHISHTHIRA INSISTED THAT WE WAIT TILL OUR EXILE WAS OVER. THE VERY SAME YUDHISHTHIRA, WHOM YOU NOW CHOOSE TO FIND FAULT WITH.



AND TO TOP IT ALL, A WARRIOR OF YOUR STATURE PRAISES ASHWATTHAMA THUS! WHY, ARMED WITH MY MACE, I CAN DEAL WITH HIM ALL BY MYSELF.



"DHРИSHTADYUMNA SAID—

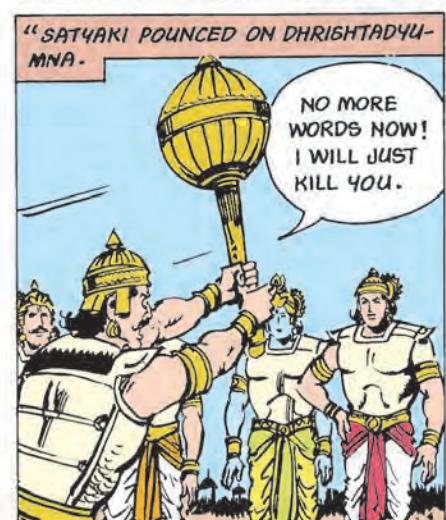
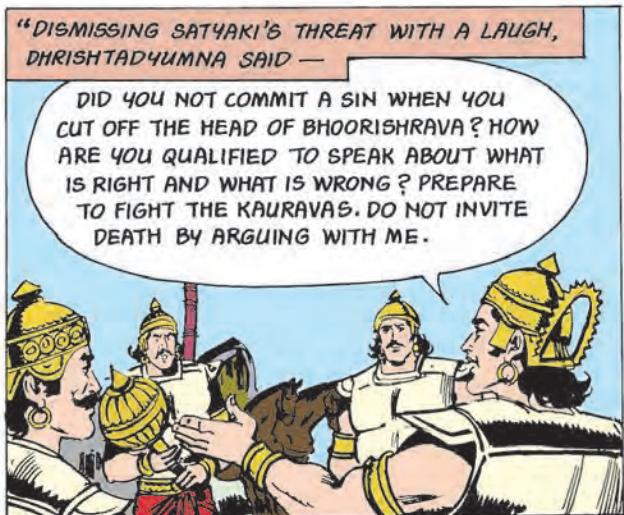
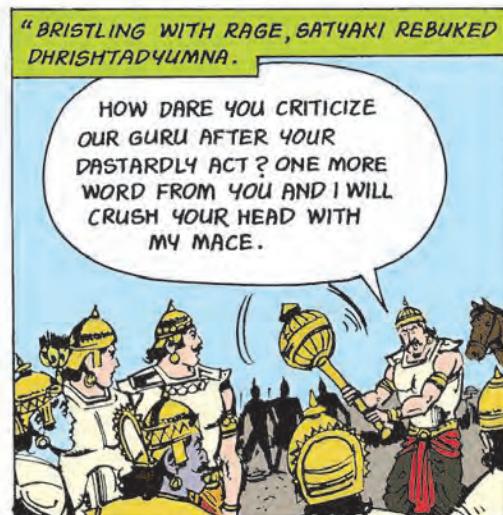
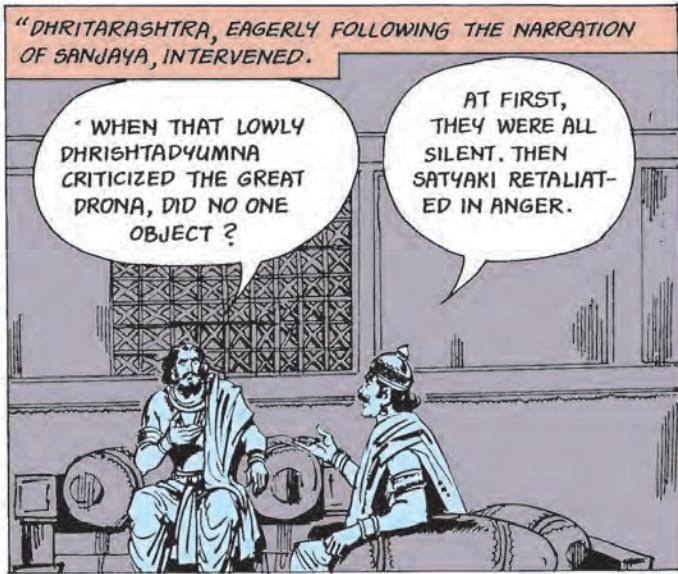
ARJUNA, YOU ARE FULL OF PRAISE FOR DRONA NOW. BUT YOU FORGET DRONA HAD FORSAKEN HIS DHARMA AS A BRAHMANA. HE PERFORMED NONE OF THE DUTIES* EXPECTED OF A BRAHMANA.



WAS IT FAIR ON HIS PART TO USE DIVINE WEAPONS ON HELPLESS SOLDIERS?



* ASSISTING IN SACRIFICES, PERFORMING SACRIFICES, GIVING AWAY GIFTS, RECEIVING GIFTS, TEACHING AND STUDYING.



KARNA IN COMMAND

"SAHADEVA ADDRESSED THE TWO HEROES -

COME ! SHED YOUR ANGER AND FORGIVE EACH OTHER.



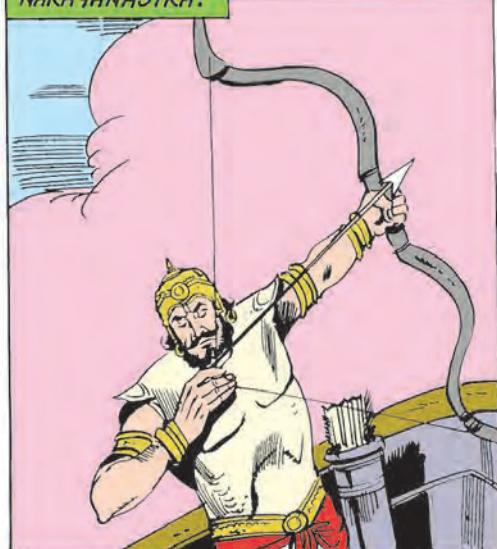
"KRISHNA AND YUDHISHTHIRA FINALLY MANAGED TO PACIFY THE TWO AND THE PANDAVAS PREPARED TO CONFRONT THE ENEMY AGAIN.



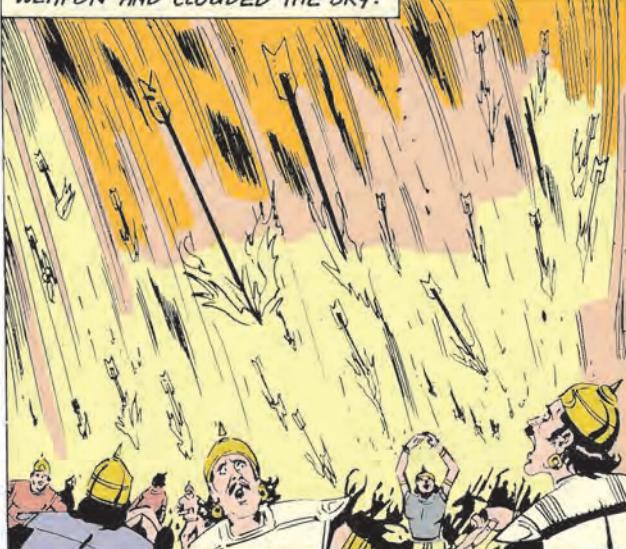
"LIKE TWO COLOSSAL MOUNTAINS IN COLLISION, THE TWO ARMIES CHARGED TOWARDS EACH OTHER.



"JUST THEN ASHWATTHAMA INVOKED THE NARAYANA STRA.



"THOUSANDS OF ARROWS SPRANG FORTH FROM THE WEAPON AND CLOUDED THE SKY.



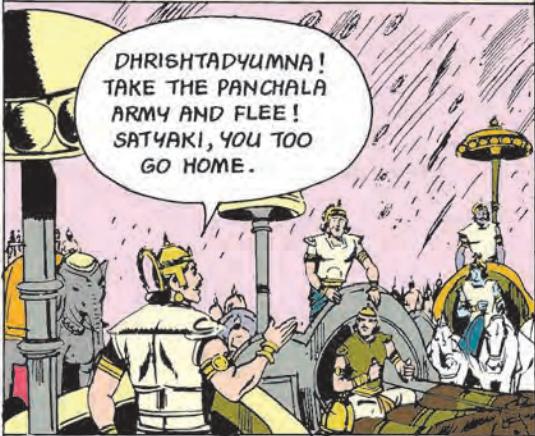
"EVEN AS THE ARROWS FELL ON THE PANDAVAS LIKE GLOWING SERPENTS, MANY A RADIANT DISC APPEARED IN THE SKY."



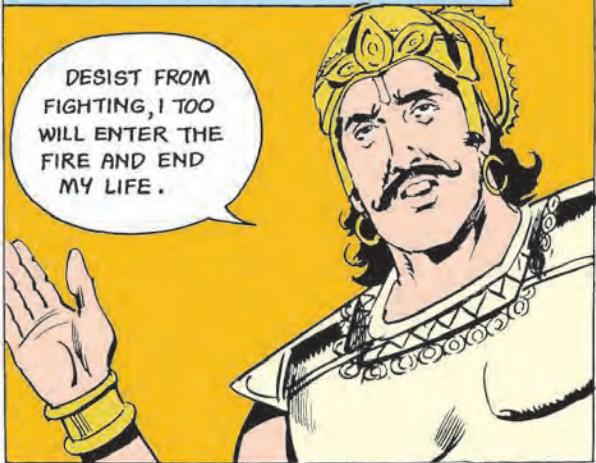
"STRANGE AND OMINOUS-LOOKING WEAPONS FOLLOWED. THE MORE THE PANDAVA FORCES OPPOSED IT, THE MORE POWERFUL THE ASTRA BECAME."



"SEEING HIS TROOPS BEING DECIMATED BY THE NARAYANA STRA, YUDHISHTHIRA SAID—

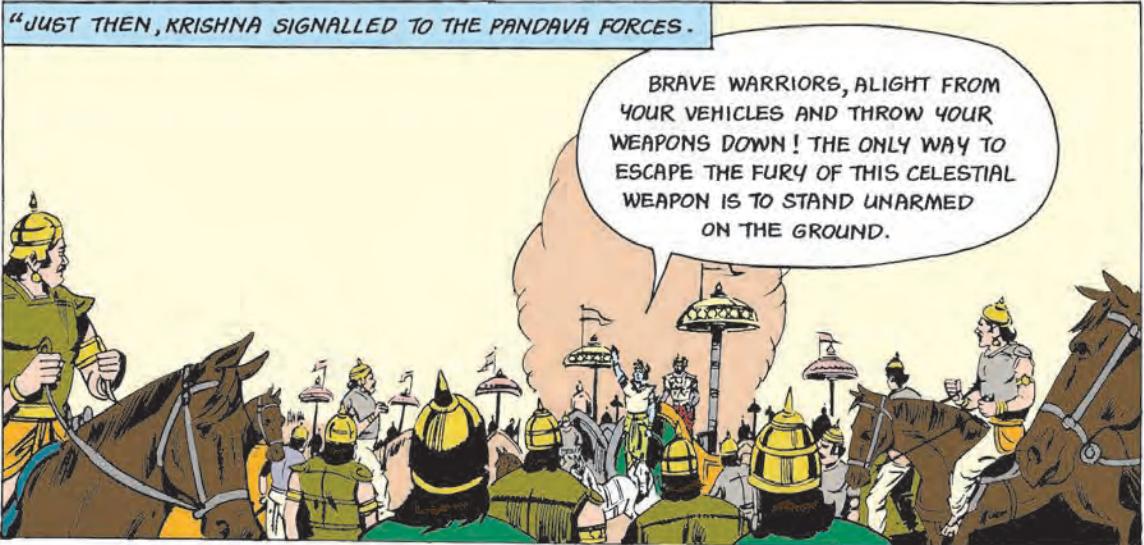


"ADDRESSING THE SOLDIERS, HE SAID—



"JUST THEN, KRISHNA SIGNALLED TO THE PANDAVA FORCES.

BRAVE WARRIOR, ALIGHT FROM YOUR VEHICLES AND THROW YOUR WEAPONS DOWN! THE ONLY WAY TO ESCAPE THE FURY OF THIS CELESTIAL WEAPON IS TO STAND UNARMED ON THE GROUND.

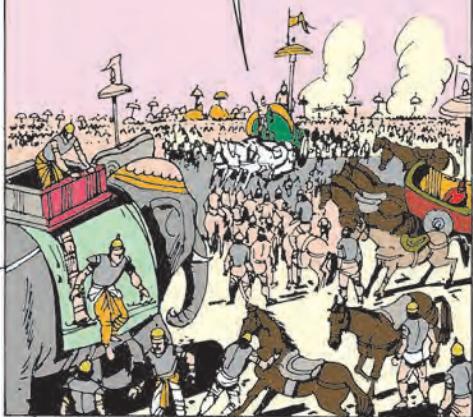


KARNA IN COMMAND

"AS THE WARRIORS DISMOUNTED,
KRISHNA EXPLAINED—

"THUS DIRECTED BY KRISHNA, THE PANDAVA WARRIORS
GOT READY TO RENOUNCE THE WEAPONS AND EVEN THE
VERY THOUGHT OF THEM.

THE MORE YOU
OPPOSE IT, THE MORE
POWERFUL THE ASTRA
WILL BECOME. YOU MUST
INSTEAD BOW BEFORE
ITS MIGHT.



"BHEEMA ALONE WAS DEFIAINT.

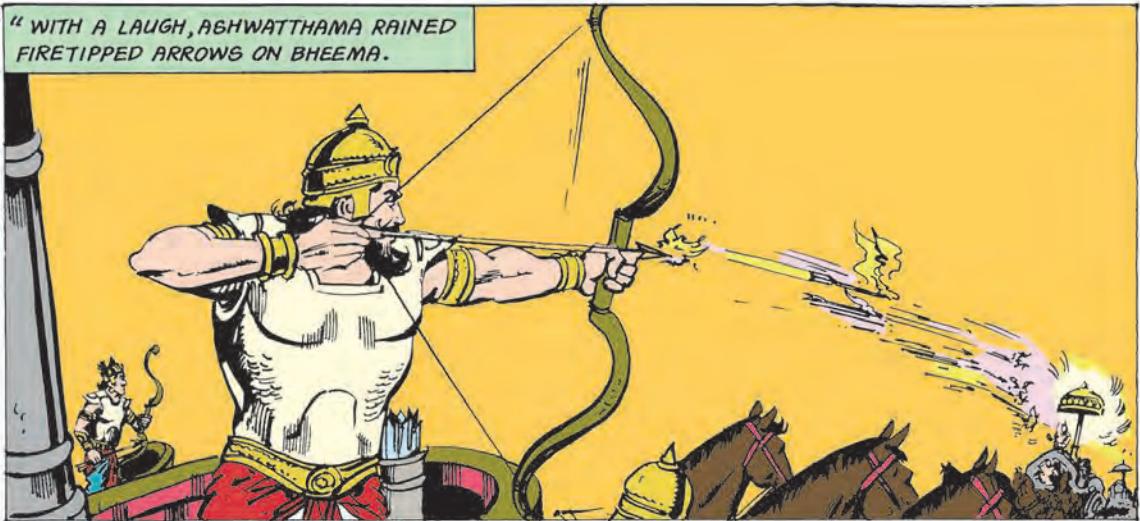
LIKE THE SUN,
I STAND UNEQUALLED.
I WILL OPPOSE THE
NARAYANA STRA
EVEN IF NO ONE
HAS DONE SO
BEFORE.



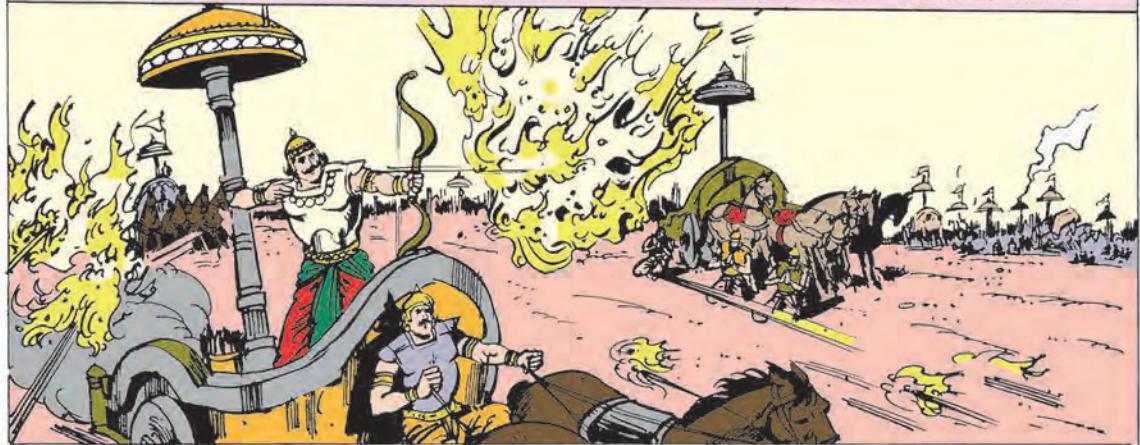
"AS HE SET FORTH ON HIS CHARIOT TOWARDS ASHWATTHAMA,
THE KAURAVAS PELETTED HIM WITH ARROWS.



"WITH A LAUGH, ASHWATTHAMA RAINED FIRETIPPED ARROWS ON BHEEMA."



"BHEEMA RESEMBLED A MIGHTY MOUNTAIN COVERED WITH FIRE-FLIES. WHEN HE TRIED TO COUNTER ASHWATTHAMA'S ATTACK WITH HIS OWN ARROWS, THE SPARKLES TURNED TO A FLAMING FIRE. AT THIS THE FRIGHTENED PANDAVA SOLDIERS QUICKLY PROSTRATED THEMSELVES ON THE GROUND."



"WHEN THEY BECAME INACTIVE, THE BRUNT OF THE NARAYANA STRA FELL ON BHEEMA."



"NOW HIS CHARIOT, CHARIOTEER AND HORSES WERE ALL ENVELOPED IN FLAMES. EVEN ARJUNA'S VARUNA STRA* WAS INEFFECTIVE IN QUENCHING THE FIRE."



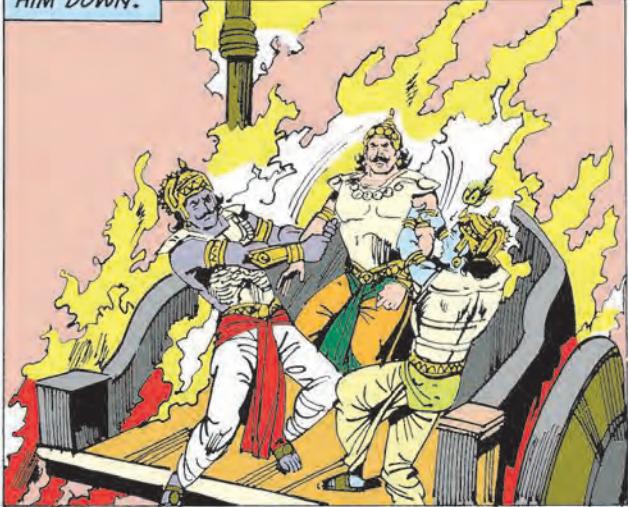
* CELESTIAL WEAPON OF VARUNA, LORD OF THE SEA.

KARNA IN COMMAND

"KRISHNA AND ARJUNA JUMPED DOWN FROM THEIR CHARIOT AND RUSHED TOWARDS BHEEMA LEAVING THEIR ARMS BEHIND.



"THEY WRENCHED OFF HIS WEAPONS AND PULLED HIM DOWN.



"BUT BHEEMA WAS STUBBORN. HE LET OUT A LION ROAR WHICH AGAIN AUGMENTED THE EFFECT OF THE ASTRA. KRISHNA REBUKED HIM.

WHY DO YOU NOT LISTEN, BHEEMA! STOP FIGHTING NOW.



"BOTH KRISHNA AND ARJUNA HELD BHEEMA DOWN TILL THE ASTRA PASSED OVER THEIR HEADS.



"THE AIR COOLED DOWN AND THE SOLDIERS AND ANIMALS REVIVED.



"AS THE PANDAVA FORCES PREPARED TO RESUME THE FIGHT, DURYODHANA TOLD ASHWATTHAMA —

COME ON! SEND THAT WEAPON AGAIN. HURRY!



"ASHWATTHAMA REPLIED WITH A DEEP SIGH—

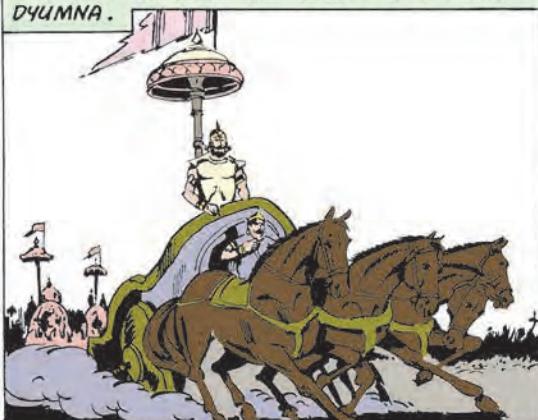
ALAS! NEITHER DOES THIS WEAPON RETURN NOR CAN IT BE INVOKED AGAIN. IF I TRY TO RECALL IT, IT WILL CERTAINLY DESTROY US.

HAD KRISHNA NOT DISCLOSED THE SECRET OF QUELLING THE NARAYANA STRA, WE WOULD HAVE DESTROYED ALL OUR ENEMIES TODAY.

THEN USE THE OTHER CELESTIAL WEAPONS AT YOUR DISPOSAL.



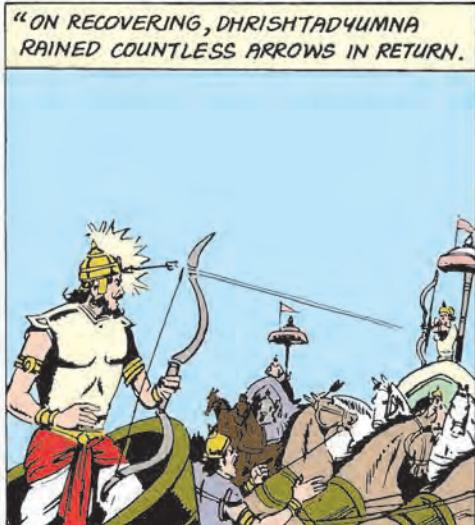
"ASHWATTHAMA SET OUT TO ATTACK DHRISHTADYUMNA."



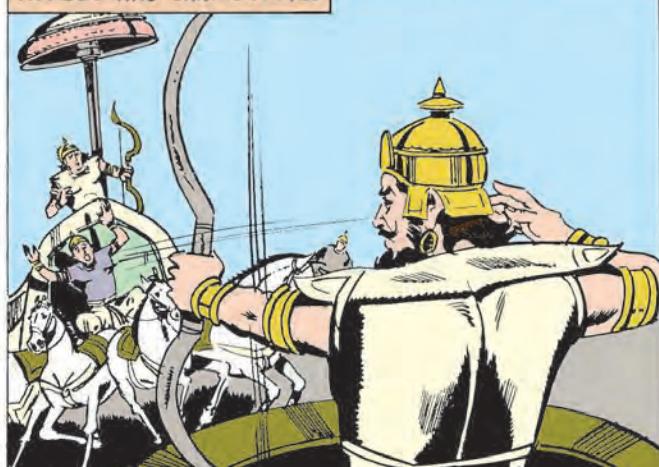
"WITH TWENTY-FIVE PIERCING ARROWS, HE WOUNDED DHRISHTADYUMNA."



"ON RECOVERING, DHRISHTADYUMNA RAINED COUNTLESS ARROWS IN RETURN."

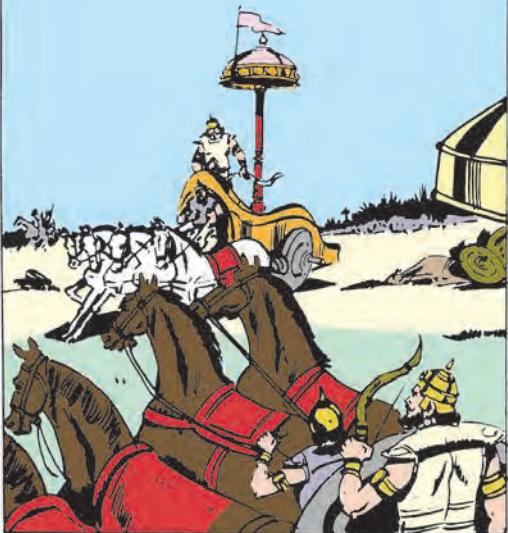


"BUT NOT FOR LONG. SOON ASHWATTHAMA KILLED HIS HORSES AND CHARIOTEER."



KARNA IN COMMAND

"SATYAKI THEN CAME TO DHRISHTADYUMNA'S RESCUE.



"WITH WELL AIMED ARROWS, SATYAKI KILLED ASHWATTHAMA'S CHARIOTEER AND DESTROYED HIS CHARIOT.



"WHEN DURYODHANA, KRIPA AND KARNA CAME TO HIM, ASHWATTHAMA ASCENDED ANOTHER CHARIOT.



"THE MIGHTY HERO THAT HE WAS, SATYAKI CONTINUED THE FIGHT UNRUFFLED. HE ONCE AGAIN DESTROYED THE CHARIOT OF ASHWATTHAMA.



"LAUGHING ASHWATTHAMA WARNED SATYAKI —

I KNOW YOU HAVE A SOFT CORNER FOR DHRISHTADYUMNA. BUT TODAY NEITHER OF YOU WILL ESCAPE ME.



"SEEING SATYAKI BEING THUS TORMENTED, FIVE MIGHTY PANDAVA WARRIOR CAME TO HIS AID."



"BHEEMA AND ASHWATTHAMA WERE SOON ENGAGED IN WELL-MATCHED BATTLE."



"ASHWATTHAMA INJURED BHEEMA'S CHARIOTEER. RELEASED FROM THE REINS, HIS HORSES TOOK BHEEMA AWAY."



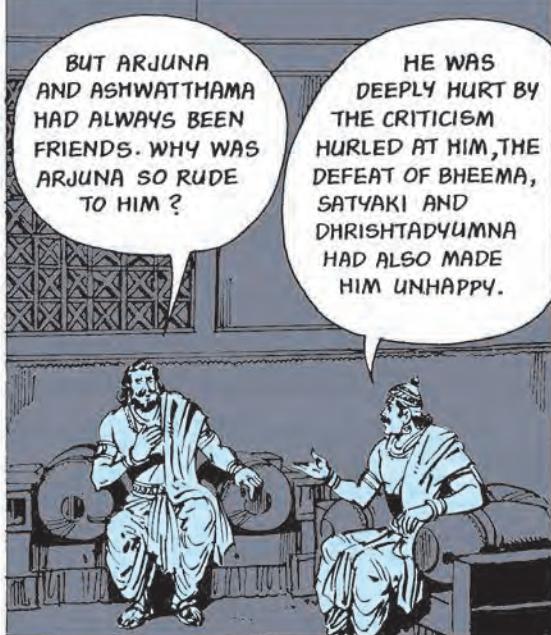
"ARJUNA HAILED ASHWATTHAMA —

LET ME SEE YOUR VALOUR, YOUR STRENGTH, YOUR PROWESS. COME! DISPLAY YOUR LOVE OF THE KAURAVAS AND YOUR HATRED FOR US. TODAY, I WILL CRUSH YOUR PRIDE.

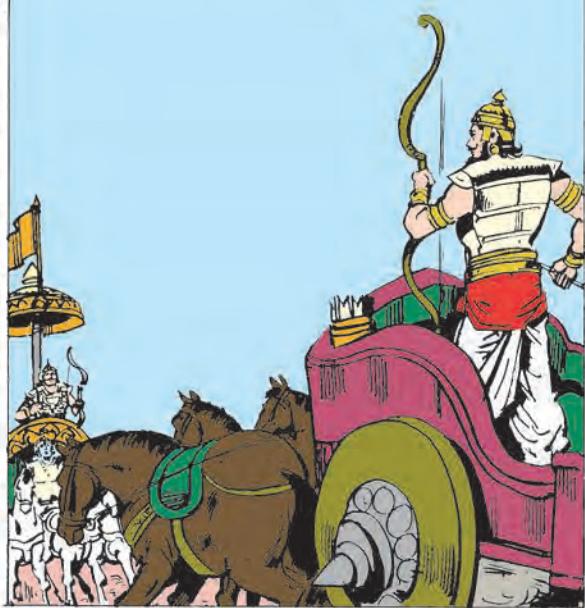


KARNA IN COMMAND

"DHRITARASHTRA WAS SURPRISED TO HEAR THIS. HE INTERRUPTED SANJAYA'S NARRATION.



"ASHWATTHAMA TOOK UP ARJUNA'S CHALLENGE.



"IMPATIENT TO KILL ARJUNA, HE INVOKED THE AGNEYASTRA.*



"NO SOONER HAD THE CELESTIAL WEAPON BEEN RELEASED THAN THE SKY RAINED DOWN ARROWS AND METEORS AND FLAMES OF FIRE ONTO THE BATTLEFIELD WHICH WAS SUDDENLY PLUNGED IN DARKNESS.



"ARJUNA THEN USED THE BRAHMASTRA WHICH SUBDUES THE MOST POWERFUL WEAPONS.



* CELESTIAL WEAPON BELONGING TO AGNI, LORD OF FIRE.

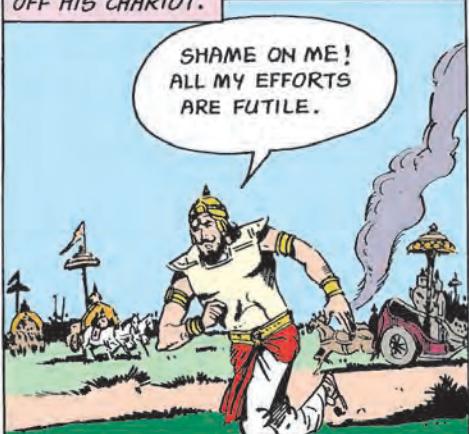
"COUNTERED BY THE BRAHMASTRA, THE DARKNESS LIFTED AND THE AIR COOLED DOWN. THE DEVASTATING EFFECT OF THE AGNEYASTRA ON THE PANDAVA FORCES NOW BECAME VISIBLE.



"BUT ARJUNA AND KRISHNA ESCAPED UNSCATHED. THIS PLUNGED ASHWATTHAMA IN A GLOOM OF DESPAIR."



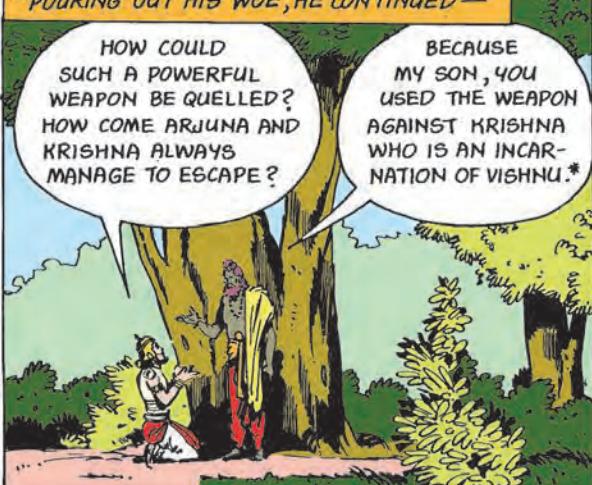
"THROWING AWAY HIS BOW HE JUMPED OFF HIS CHARIOT.



"AS HE WAS RUNNING OFF THE BATTLEFIELD FULL OF DESPAIR, HE CAME ACROSS SAGE VYASA.



"POURING OUT HIS WOE, HE CONTINUED —

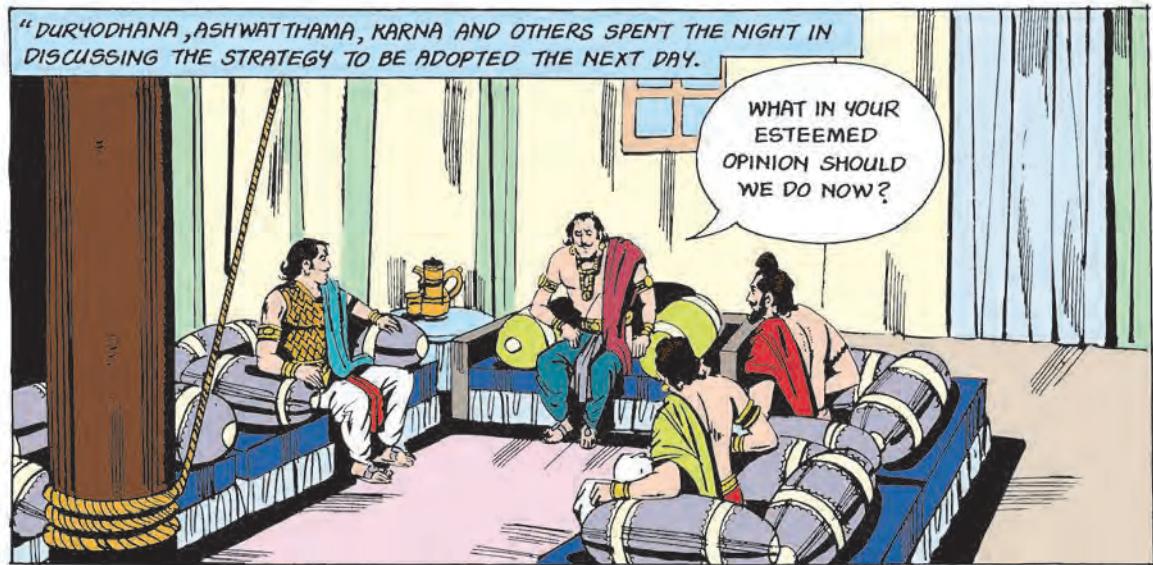


"ON HEARING THIS, ASHWATTHAMA BADE HIS ARMY TO GO BACK TO THE CAMP.



KARNA IN COMMAND

"DURYODHANA, ASHWATTHAMA, KARNA AND OTHERS SPENT THE NIGHT IN DISCUSSING THE STRATEGY TO BE ADOPTED THE NEXT DAY.



"ASHWATTHAMA SAID —

THOUGH MANY OF OUR ABLE WARRIORS HAVE BEEN KILLED, WE SHOULD NOT LOSE HEART. WITH KARNA IN COMMAND WE CAN STILL VANQUISH THE ENEMY.

"HIS WORDS WERE ENCOURAGING TO DURYODHANA, ADDRESSING KARNA, HE SAID —

BHEESMA AND DRONA, OUR TWO VENERABLE COMMANDERS, ARE NO MORE. THEY WERE BRAVE BUT THEY WERE INCLINED TO BE PARTIAL TO THE PANDAVAS.

YOU ARE SURELY THE BEST MAN TO LEAD OUR FORCES NOW. YOU HAVE ALWAYS BEEN CONCERNED ABOUT OUR WELFARE. COME! TAKE CHARGE OF THE ARMY.

I WILL BE GLAD TO DO SO. CONSIDER THE PANDAVAS ALREADY DEFEATED.

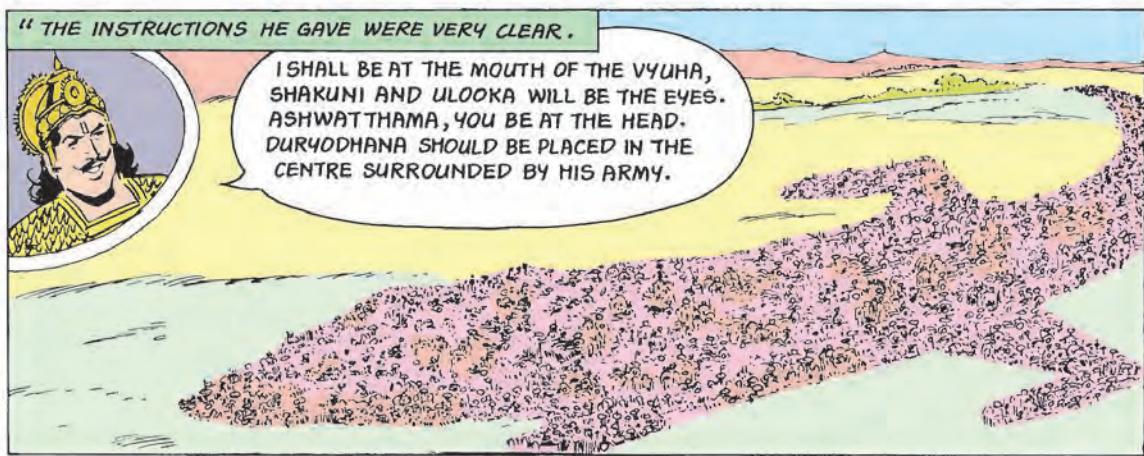
"KARNA WAS FORMALLY INSTALLED AS THE THIRD COMMANDER OF THE KAURAVAS.



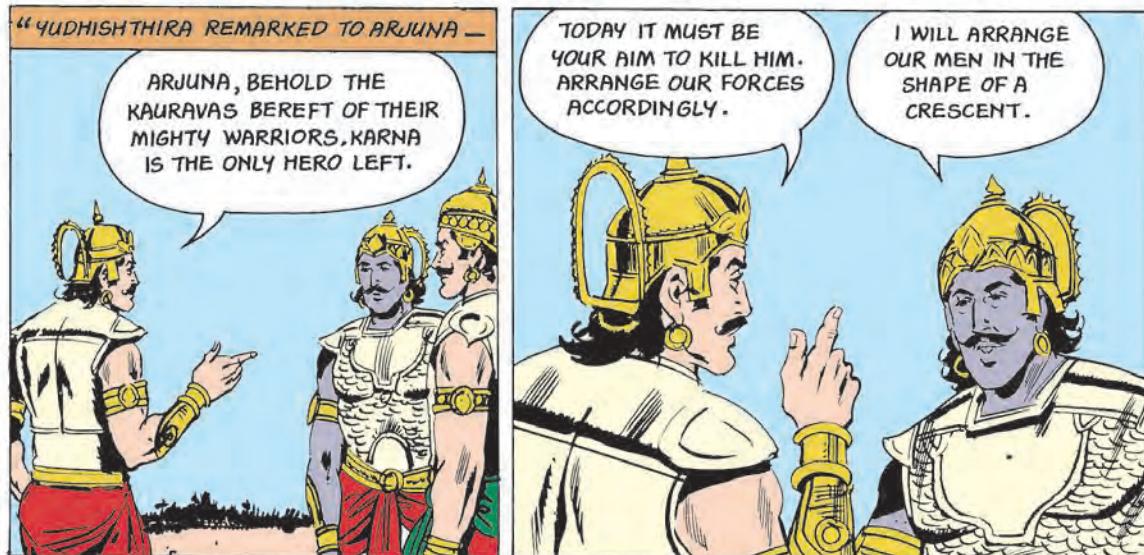
"ON THE MORNING OF THE SIXTEENTH DAY, THE KAURAVA CAMP RESOUNDED WITH THE VOICE OF KARNA. HE ARRANGED THE FORCES IN THE MAKARA VYUHA.*



"THE INSTRUCTIONS HE GAVE WERE VERY CLEAR."



"YUDHISHTHIRA REMARKED TO ARJUNA —

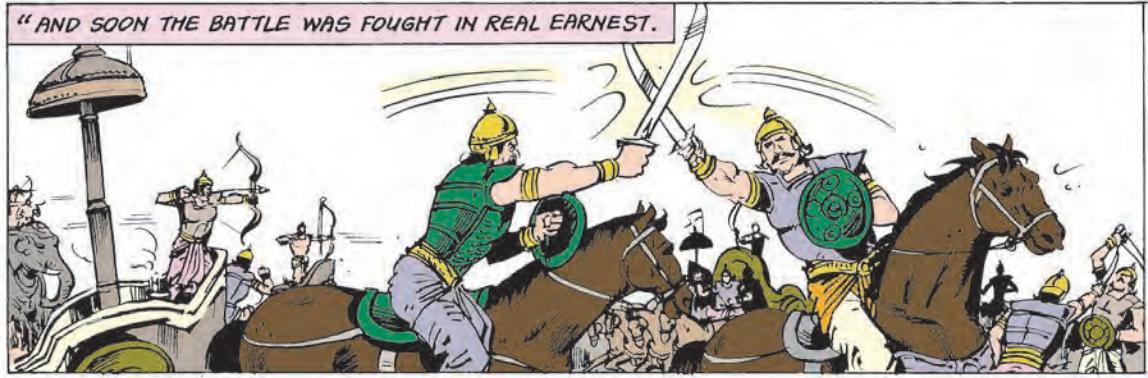


KARNA IN COMMAND

"ARJUNA ARRANGED THE FORCES TO RESEMBLE A HALF MOON WITH BHEEMA ON THE LEFT AND DHRISHTADYUMNA ON THE RIGHT."



"AND SOON THE BATTLE WAS FOUGHT IN REAL EARNEST."



"FIERCE WAS THE DUEL BETWEEN ASHWATTHAMA AND BHEEMA."



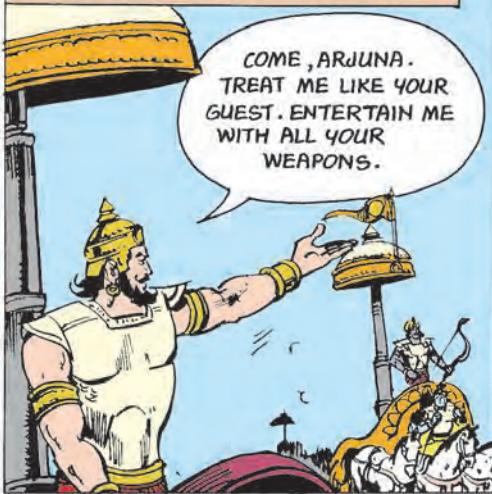
"AFTER A VIGOROUS EXCHANGE OF ARROWS, THEY MADE EACH OTHER FAINT."



"ARJUNA WAS MEANWHILE WRECKING DESTRUCTION AMONG THE SAMSHAKTAKAS WHO HAD CHALLENGED HIM ONCE AGAIN."



"EVEN AS HE KEPT REDUCING THEIR NUMBERS, ASHWATTHAMA CALLED OUT TO HIM FROM ANOTHER DIRECTION.



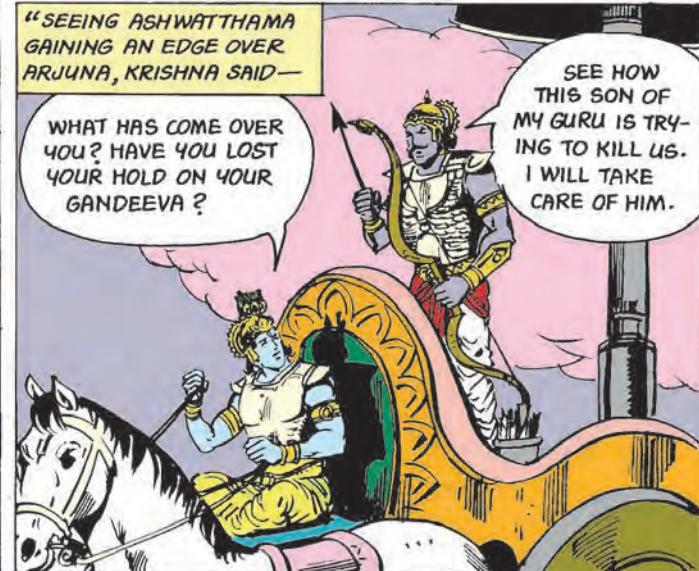
"ARJUNA CONSULTED KRISHNA.



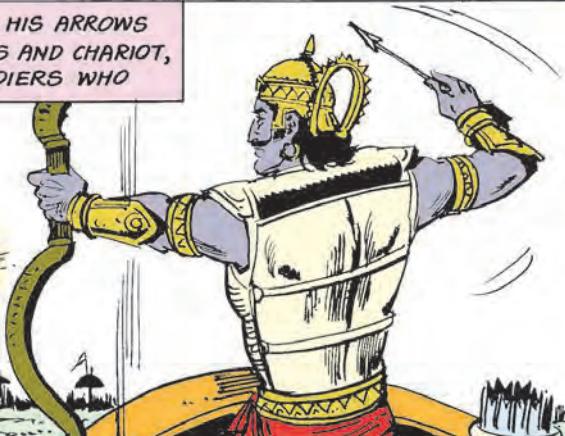
"IN RESPONSE, KRISHNA LED THE CHARIOT TOWARDS ASHWATTHAMA. A FURIOUS FIGHT ENSUED.



"SEEING ASHWATTHAMA GAINING AN EDGE OVER ARJUNA, KRISHNA SAID—



"THE FURY WITH WHICH ARJUNA THEN SHOT HIS ARROWS PIERCED NOT ONLY ASHWATTHAMA'S HORSES AND CHARIOT, BUT ALSO FELLED THE ELEPHANTS AND SOLDIERS WHO WERE FAR AWAY.



KARNA IN COMMAND

"GRIEVOUSLY INJURED, ASHWATTHAMA'S HORSES FLED THE FIELD, CARRYING THE CHARIOT AWAY WITH THEM."



"AS HE WAS LED AWAY FROM THE FIELD, ASHWATTHAMA REFLECTED."



KRISHNA AND ARJUNA ARE BOUND TO BE VICTORIOUS. I WILL NOT CONFRONT ARJUNA AGAIN. LET ME INSTEAD JOIN KARNA'S FORCES.

"KARNA WAS BUSY CONFRONTING NAKULA'S ONSLAUGHT."

O KARNA! THE GODS ARE INDEED PLEASED WITH ME TODAY. HOW I LONG TO KILL YOU, THE ROOT CAUSE OF ALL THIS ANIMOSITY!

BRAVE MEN DO NOT TALK; THEY ACT. LET ME PUT YOUR PRIDE IN ITS PLACE.



"KARNA ACTED OUT HIS THREAT AND UNABLE TO CONTAIN HIS ATTACK, NAKULA TRIED TO ESCAPE. KARNA LAUGHED AND SAID:

DO YOU REALISE YOU WERE BOASTING IN VAIN? RUN AWAY NOW.



"BY NOON WHILE KARNA CIRCLED THE BATTLEFIELD CRUSING HAVOC AND DESTRUCTION, SEVERAL DUELS WERE BEING FOUGHT."

"YUYUTSU FOUGHT ULOOKA."



"KRIPA CONFRONTED DHRISHTADYUMNA TO Avenge THE DEATH OF DRONA."



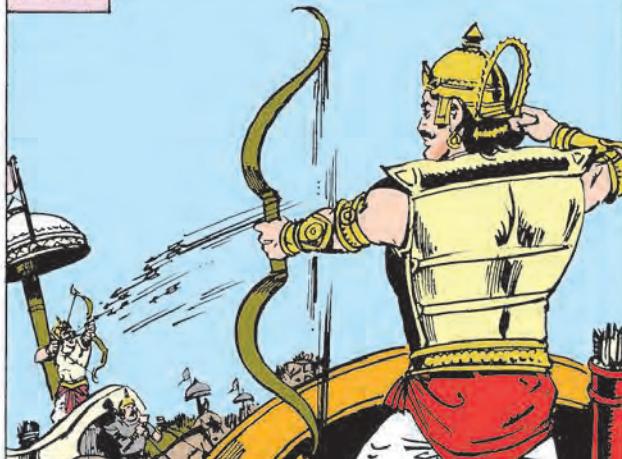
"KRITAVARMA'S ARROW PIERCED SHIKHANDI'S ARMOUR AND, AS HE FAINTED, HE HELD ON TO THE FLAGPOST."



"ARJUNA WAS IN HIS ELEMENT DESTROYING THE SAMSHAFTAKAS WHO HAD ESCAPED HIS FURY EARLIER.



"DURYODHANA'S CONFRONTATION WITH YUDHISHTHIRA WAS IN KEEPING WITH A BRAVE KING. BUT NOT FOR LONG.



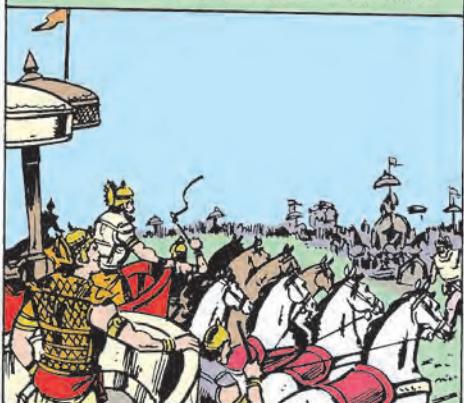
"WITH FOUR WELL-ARMED ARROWS, YUDHISHTHIRA KILLED DURYODHANA'S FOUR HORSES; WITH THE FIFTH ARROW, HE BEHEADED THE CHARIOOTEER. WITH THE SIXTH, THE BANNER...



"...WITH THE SEVENTH, HE BROKE DURYODHANA'S BOW, AND WITH THE EIGHTH, HE SEVERED THE SWORD FROM DURYODHANA'S HAND.



"SEEING HIS PLIGHT, KARNA, ASHWATHAMA AND KRIPA RUSHED TO HIS AID. SOON THE FIGHT BECAME GENERAL.

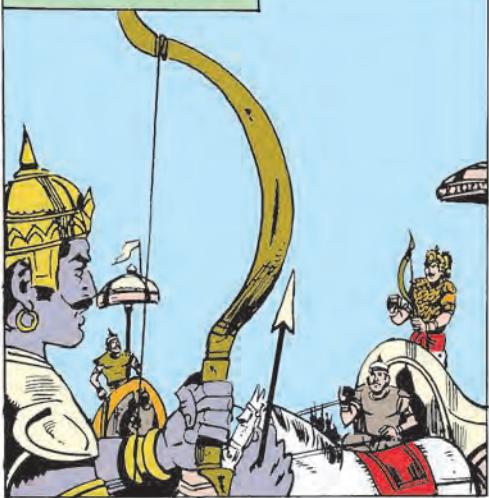


"SO SWIFTLY DID ARJUNA SHOOT HIS ARROWS THAT THE SKY AS WELL AS THE EIGHT DIRECTIONS SEEMED TO BE FILLED WITH THE ARROWS RELEASED BY HIS GANDEEVA. HE SEEMED TO BE DANCING IN HIS CHARIOT.



KARNA IN COMMAND

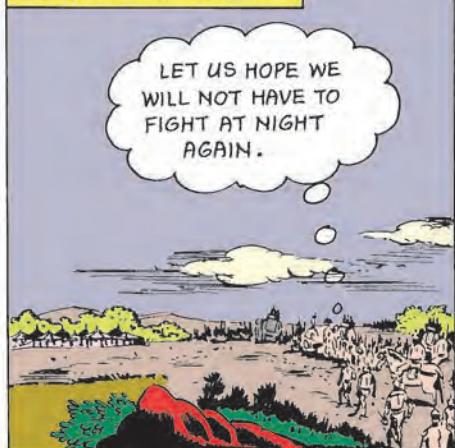
"AFTER INFlicting DEFEAT ON DURYODHANA, ASHWATTHAMA AND KRITAVARMA, ARJUNA TURNED TO KARNA.



"WHEN KARNA'S SHARP ARROWS FOUND THEIR MARK AND WOUNDED BOTH ARJUNA AND KRISHNA, THE PANDAVA WARRIORs GATHERED TO ATTACK HIM.



"AT SUNSET, THE SOLDIERS BEGAN TO RETURN TO THEIR CAMP.



"WHEN THE KAURAVA WARRIORs GATHERED TO DISCUSS THE STRATEGY FOR THE NEXT DAY, KARNA DECLARED—

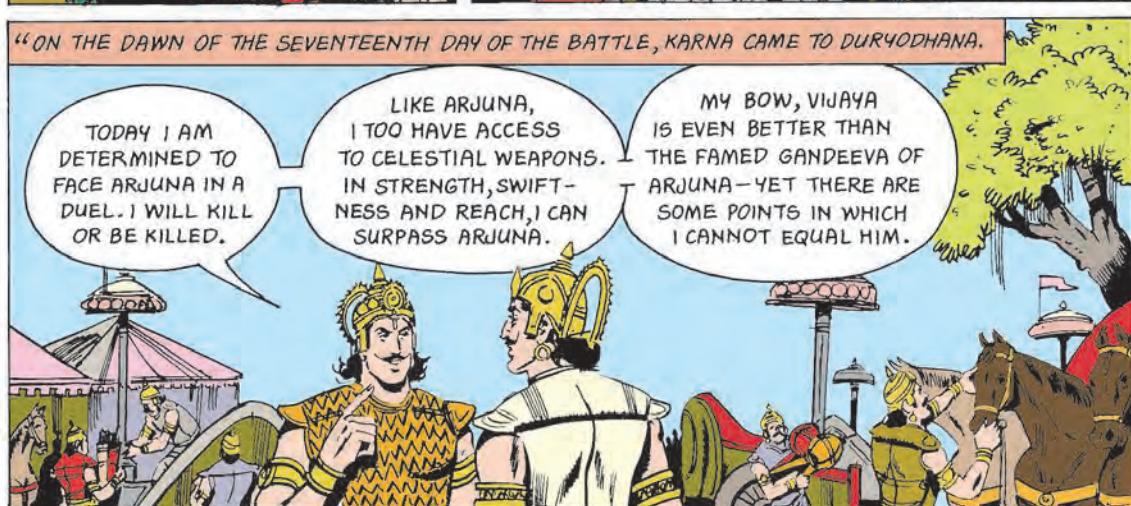


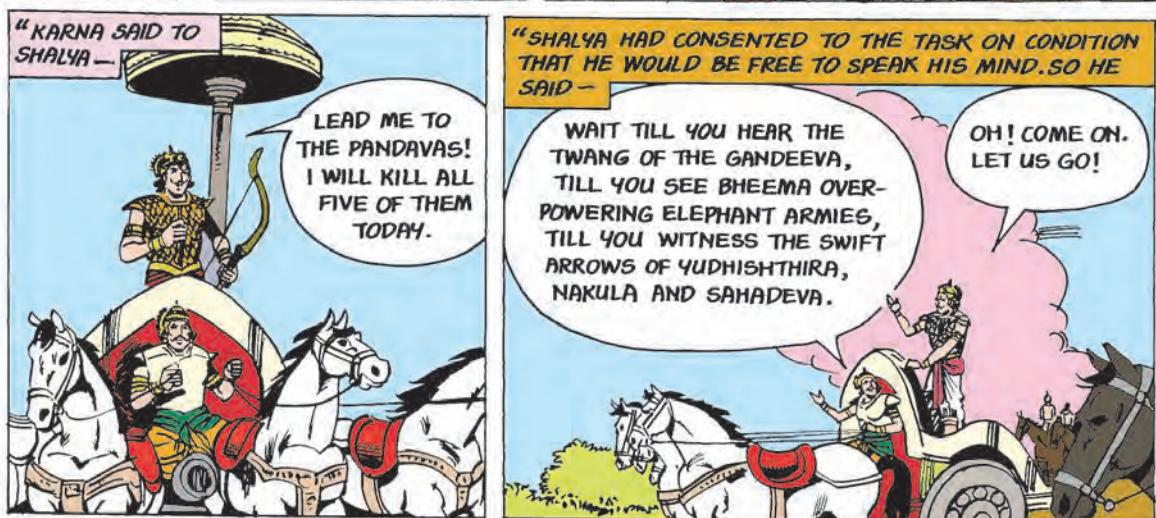
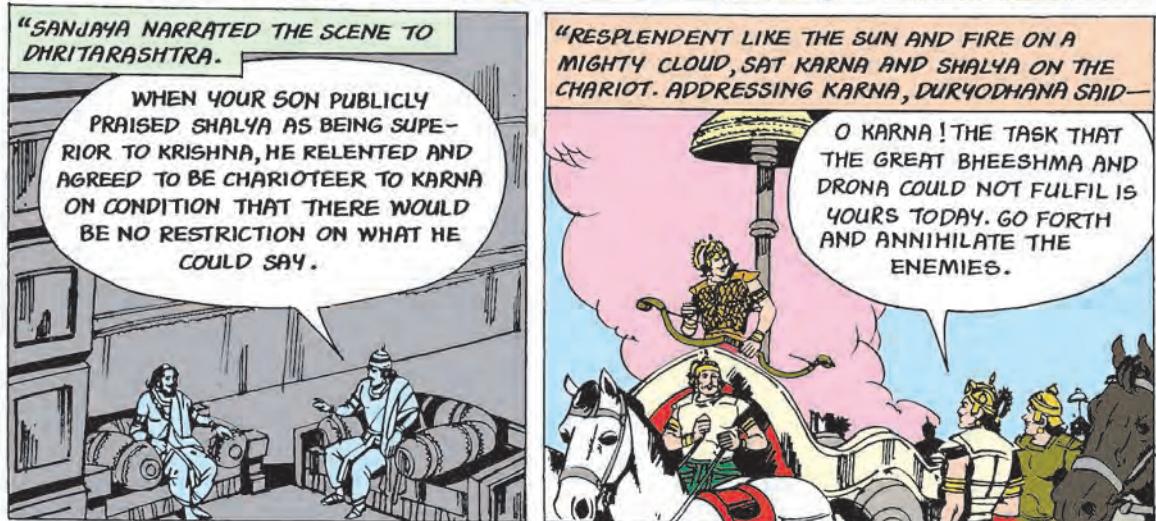
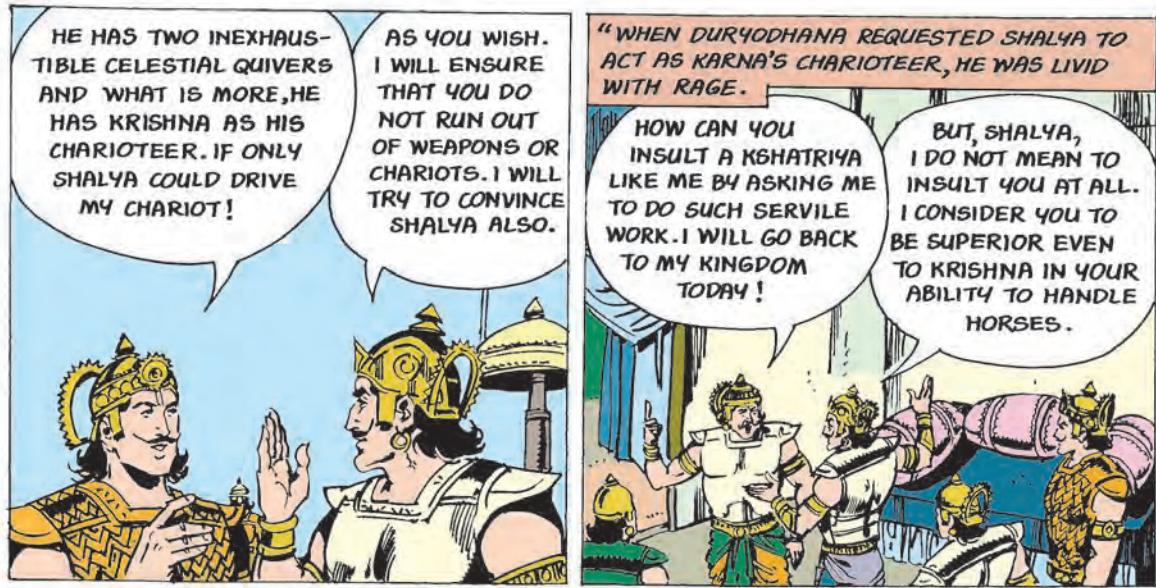
"ON THE DAWN OF THE SEVENTEENTH DAY OF THE BATTLE, KARNA CAME TO DURYODHANA.

TODAY I AM DETERMINED TO FACE ARJUNA IN A DUEL. I WILL KILL OR BE KILLED.

LIKE ARJUNA, I TOO HAVE ACCESS TO CELESTIAL WEAPONS. IN STRENGTH, SWIFTNESS AND REACH, I CAN SURPASS ARJUNA.

MY BOW, VIJAYA IS EVEN BETTER THAN THE FAMED GANDEEVA OF ARJUNA—YET THERE ARE SOME POINTS IN WHICH I CANNOT EQUAL HIM.





KARNA IN COMMAND

"AS THEY PROCEEDED TOWARDS THE BATTLEFIELD, SHALYA CONTINUED TO EXTOL ARJUNA'S VIRTUES.

LIKE THE SUN AND THE MOON ARE KRISHNA AND ARJUNA. YOU ARE A MERE FIREFLY IN COMPARISON.

I PROMISED TO ALLOW YOU TO SPEAK FREELY, OTHERWISE...

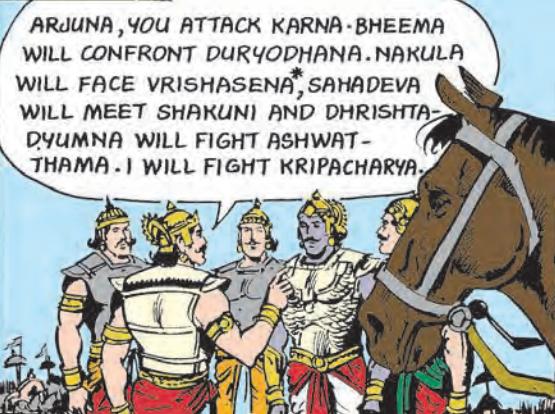
"BUT WHEN THEY CONTINUED TO EXCHANGE INSULTS DURYODHANA INTERVENED—

KARNA, PLEASE STOP ARGUING. SHALYA, I REQUEST YOU TO PUT AN END TO THIS FUTILE TALK.



"SEEING THE COMPLEX FORMATION OF THE KAURAVAS, YUDHISHTHIRA ASKED ARJUNA TO ARRAY THEIR FORCES IN A SUITABLE FORMATION.

ARJUNA, YOU ATTACK KARNA. BHEEMA WILL CONFRONT DURYODHANA. NAKULA WILL FACE VRISHASENA. SAHADEVA WILL MEET SHAKUNI AND DHRISHTADYUMNA WILL FIGHT ASHWATTHAMA. I WILL FIGHT Kripacharya.



"WHEN THE SAMSHAPTAKAS CALLED OUT TO ARJUNA, HE ATTACKED THEM SINGLE-HANDED.



"AFTER THEIR NUMBERS BECAME DEPLETED, HE RAGED THROUGH THE KAURAVA FORCES LIKE FURY INCARNATE.

KARNA TOO WAS IN HIS ELEMENT. HE RESEMBLED INDRA DEMOLISHING THE ASURAS.



* KARNA'S SON.

"YUDHISHTHIRA APPROACHED HIM.

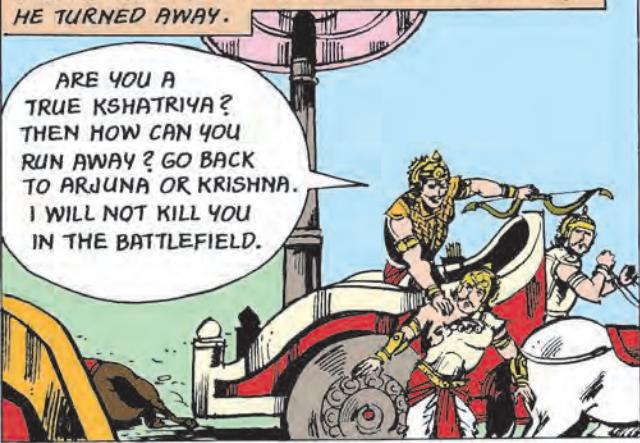
LET ME SEE
YOUR FAMED
PROWESS. SHOW
ME HOW POWER-
FUL YOU ARE.

I WILL BE
TOO GLAD
TO DO SO.



"ALTHOUGH SATYAKI AND OTHERS CAME TO HELP
YUDHISHTHIRA, KARNA ROUTED THEM ALL. WHEN
YUDHISHTHIRA'S ARMOUR WAS TORN ASUNDER,
HE TURNED AWAY."

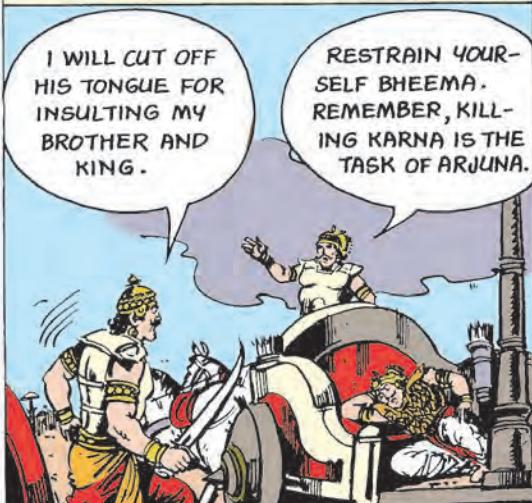
ARE YOU A
TRUE KSHATRIYA?
THEN HOW CAN YOU
RUN AWAY? GO BACK
TO ARJUNA OR KRISHNA.
I WILL NOT KILL YOU
IN THE BATTLEFIELD.



"BHEEMA WAS ENRAGED AT YUDHISHTHIRA'S
INSULT. UNDER HIS ATTACK, KARNA FAINTED.

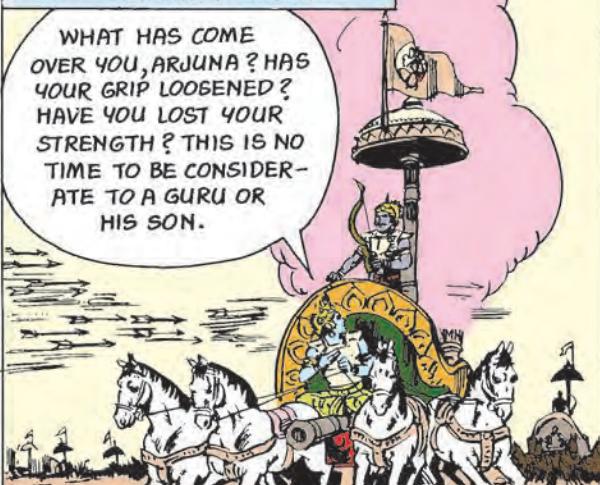
I WILL CUT OFF
HIS TONGUE FOR
INSULTING MY
BROTHER AND
KING.

RESTRAIN YOUR-
SELF BHEEMA.
REMEMBER, KILL-
ING KARNA IS THE
TASK OF ARJUNA.



"MEANWHILE ASHWATTHAMA CHALLENGED
ARJUNA TO A DUEL AND COVERED HIM WITH
ARROWS. KRISHNA EXCLAIMED—

WHAT HAS COME
OVER YOU, ARJUNA? HAS
YOUR GRIP LOOSENGED?
HAVE YOU LOST YOUR
STRENGTH? THIS IS NO
TIME TO BE CONSIDER-
ATE TO A GURU OR
HIS SON.



"KRISHNA'S TAUNTS HAD THE DESIRED
EFFECT. WITH DIVINE WEAPONS, ARJUNA
ATTACKED ASHWATTHAMA WITH SUCH
FORCE THAT THE LATTER FAINTED AND
HIS CHARIOT WAS DRIVEN AWAY FROM
THE BATTLEFIELD.



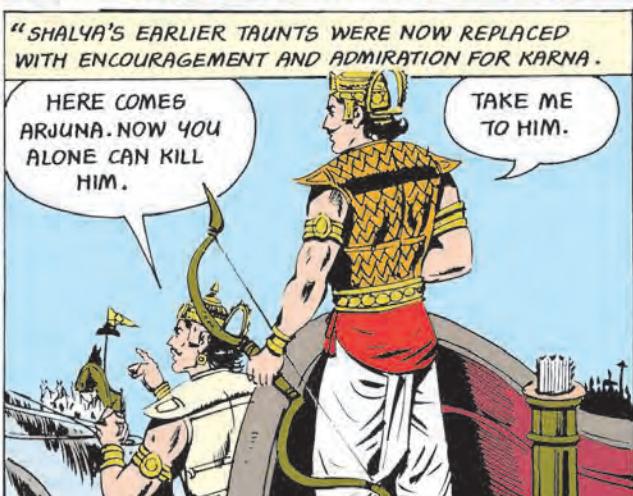
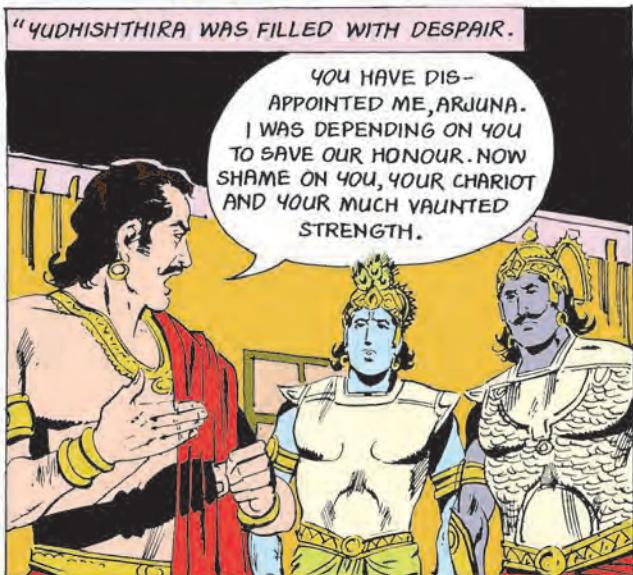
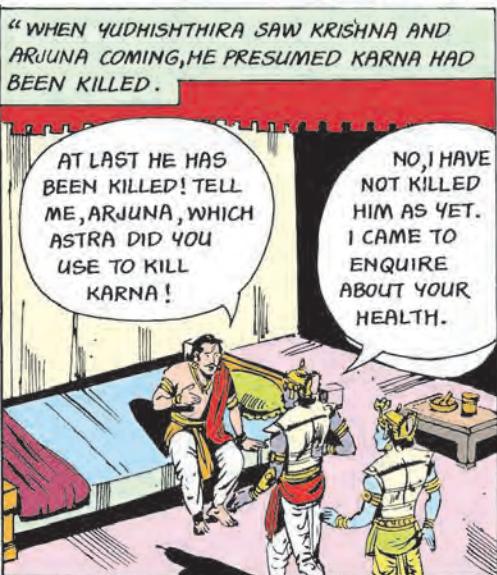
"KRISHNA THEN DREW ARJUNA'S ATTENTION TO
KARNA."

BEHOLD KARNA!
HOW GRACEFULLY HE
FIGHTS. THE FIELD IS
STREWN WITH HIS
VICTIMS. IT IS TIME
YOU CONFRONTED
HIM.

YES, I WILL. BUT
WHERE IS
YUDHISHTHIRA?



KARNA IN COMMAND



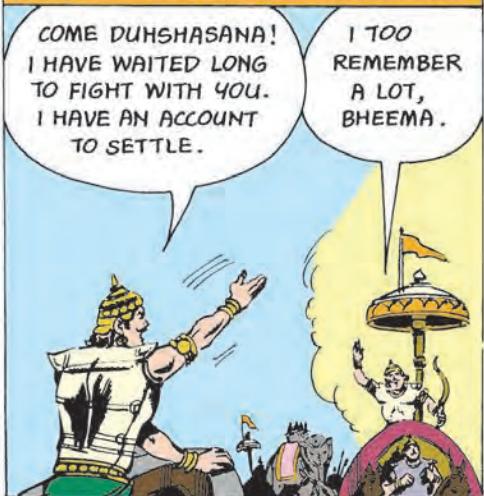
"BUT WHEN KARNA TRIED TO APPROACH ARJUNA, HIS PATH WAS BLOCKED BY FIVE PANDAVA WARRIOR.



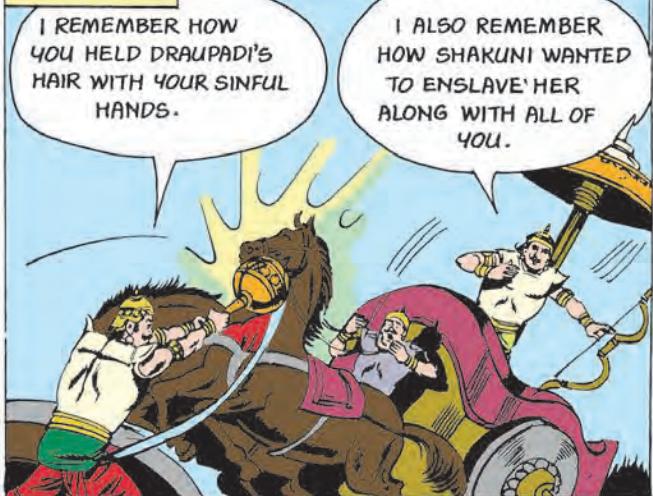
"KARNA ROUTED THEM ALL IN A TRICE.



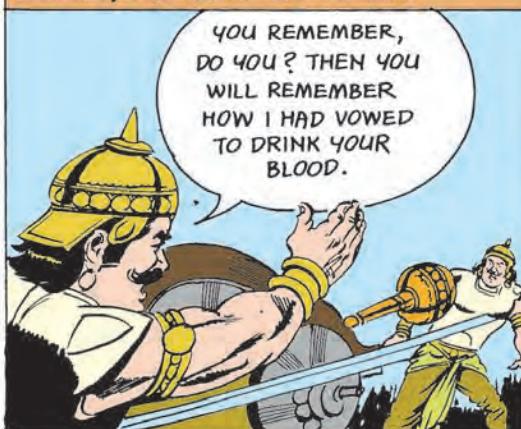
"IN THE GENERAL FIGHT THAT ENSUED, BHEEMA ENCOUNTERED DUHSHASANA.



"WHEN HIS BOW WAS BROKEN, BHEEMA TOOK UP A HUGE MACE.



"AFTER HE KNOCKED DUHSHASANA OFF HIS CHARIOT, BHEEMA LET OUT A ROAR.



"BHEEMA TURNED TO DURYODHANA.

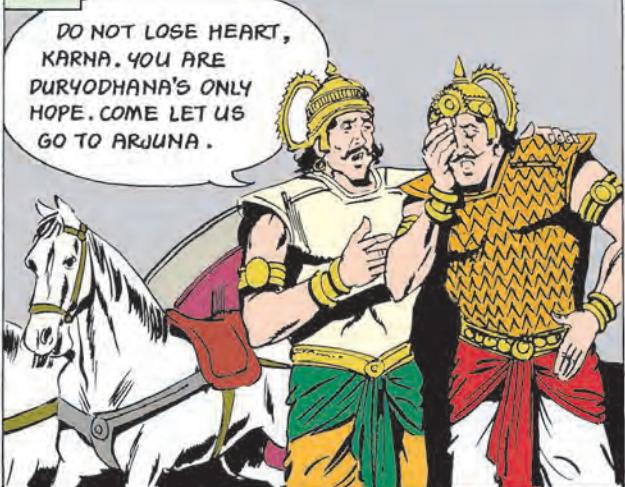


KARNA IN COMMAND

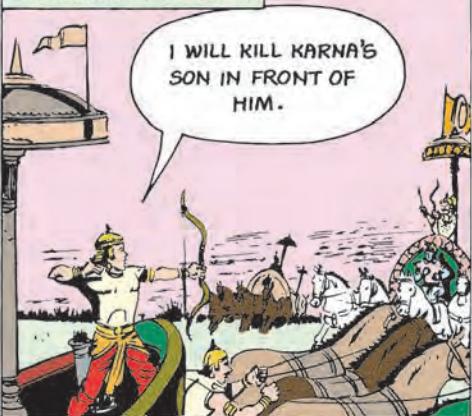
"BHEEMA CUT OFF DUHSHASANA'S RIGHT HAND, RIPPED OPEN HIS CHEST AND TASTED HIS BLOOD."



"KARNA WAS GRIEF-STRICKEN. SHALYA COUNSELLLED HIM."



"KARNA'S SON VRISHASENA WAS TORMENTING NAKULA. BHEEMA CALLED TO ARJUNA FOR HELP."



"ARJUNA'S SHARP ARROWS FOUND THEIR MARK. KARNA SAW HIS SON BEING KILLED. ENRAGED HE SAID—



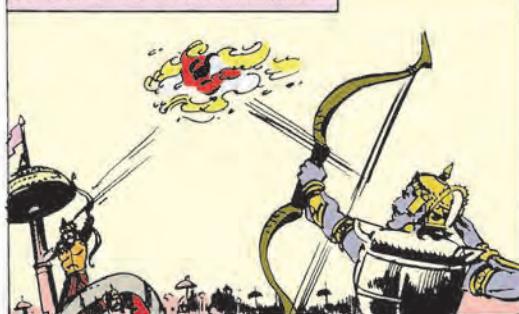
"AT LAST THE TWO HEROES WERE FACE TO FACE, WELL-MATCHED WITH THEIR SINEWY BODIES RUBBED WITH RED SANDALPASTE. BOTH WERE MOUNTED ON EXCELLENT CHARIOTS WITH WHITE UMBRELLAS AND WHITE HORSES."



"AS THEY WERE ENGAGED IN THE DUEL, THEIR MEN ENCOURAGED THEM WITH CHEERS AND THE BLOWING OF CONCH SHELLS.



"SOON, INSTEAD OF EARTHLY WEAPONS, THEY RESORTED TO CELESTIAL ONES. ARJUNA SENT OFF THE AGNEYASTRA AND KARNA COUNTERED IT WITH THE VARUNA STRA.



"IT WAS A TUSSE BETWEEN EQUALS.



"KRISHNA SAID —

HOW COME
KARNA IS
ABLE TO
DESTROY
ALL YOUR
WEAPONS
TODAY?
ROUSE
YOURSELF!

I WILL
USE THE
BRAHMA-
ASTRA NOW.

"THE BRAHMAASTRA COVERED
THE FIELD WITH ARROWS
AND DEAD BODIES BUT
KARNA'S ARROWS WERE
ALSO COMING IN A
CONTINUOUS STREAM.



"THE AIR RESOUNDED WITH THE TERRIBLE
TWANGS OF THE GANDEEVA OF ARJUNA AND THE
VIJAYA OF KARNA. THEY TWANGED TO LET
FORTH A BARRAGE OF ARROWS. ELEVEN TIMES
KARNA CUT ARJUNA'S BOW STRINGS. QUICK
AS A FLASH, ARJUNA REPLACED THEM EVERY
TIME. KARNA THEN DISCHARGED FIVE SNAKE-
LIKE ARROWS. ARJUNA CUT EVERY ONE OF
THEM INTO PIECES.



KARNA IN COMMAND

"SO NUMEROUS WERE THE ARROWS SHOT BY ARJUNA THAT NOTHING — NEITHER KARNA'S CHARIOT NOR THE SUN IN THE SKY — WAS VISIBLE FOR SOME TIME.



"SOON THE WARRIOR BEHIND KARNA FLED IN TERROR OF ARJUNA. KARNA AIMED THE NAGASTRA AT ARJUNA'S NECK.

ARJUNA ! BID FAREWELL TO THE WORLD. THIS IS YOUR LAST MOMENT.



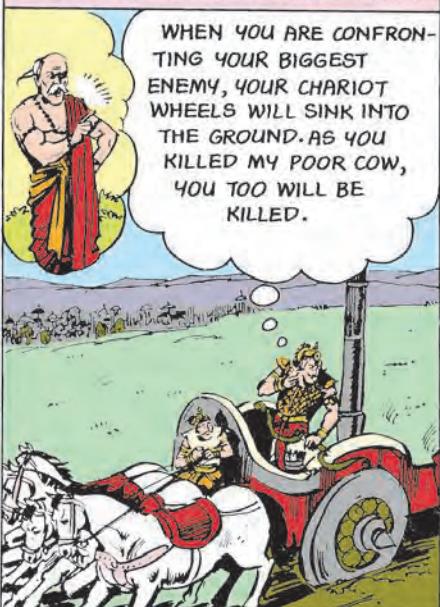
"JUST IN TIME, KRISHNA PRESSED HARD SO THAT THE HORSES BENT DOWN AND THE CHARIOT SUNK BY FIVE INCHES IN THE GROUND. NOW THE WEAPON SCRAPED PAST ARJUNA'S HEAD AND KNOCKED OFF HIS CROWN.



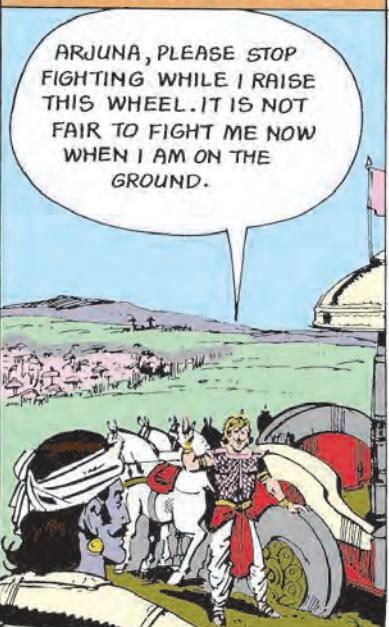
"ARJUNA GATHERED HIS CURLY TRESSES IN A WHITE KERCHIEF AND RESUMED FIGHTING. BY NOW EVEN KRISHNA AND SHALYA WERE WOUNDED.



"MEANWHILE, KARNA'S CHARIOT WHEEL WAS SINKING INTO THE GROUND. WHEN HE NOTICED IT, HE RECALLED HOW A BRAHMANA HAD ONCE CURSED HIM.



"BY NOW THE LEFT WHEEL WAS TOTALLY SUNK IN THE SOFT EARTH. KARNA WAS FORCED TO DESCEND.



"KRISHNA WAS FURIOUS.

SO YOU WANT US TO BE FAIR. DID YOU THINK OF BEING FAIR AT THE GAME OF DICE? WERE YOU RIGHTEOUS WHEN YOU SURROUNDED AND KILLED ABHIMANYU?

"KARNA CLIMBED ONTO HIS CHARIOT AGAIN AND FOUGHT ARJUNA. WHEN HE MANAGED TO INJURE HIM, HE GOT OFF THE CHARIOT AGAIN. KRISHNA SAID —

HURRY, ARJUNA! KILL HIM BEFORE HE GETS UP ON HIS CHARIOT.

"ARJUNA INVOKED A DIVINE ASTRA, ANJALIKA, AND AIMED IT AT KARNA WHO WAS STILL STRUGGLING TO LIFT THE WHEEL.

IF I HAVE LIVED A DUTIFUL AND RIGHTEOUS LIFE, MAY THIS WEAPON DESTROY MY ENEMY.

LIKE THE SUN DESCENDING ON EARTH, THE HEAD OF THE GREAT KARNA FELL ON THE GROUND.

"THUS ENDS THE THIRTY-SEVENTH SESSION OF OUR RENDERING OF VYASA'S IMMORTAL ITIHASA MAHABHARATA.